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# HUMAN BEINGS,

A NOVEL.

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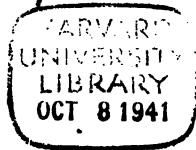
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# HUMAN BEINGS.

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## CHAPTER I.

*The way to get Married.*

**L**ADY Buckhurst continued so long insensible, that Mrs O'Rourke unable to revive her by means of a smelling bottle which she drew from her own pocket, rang the bell, and on the appearance of John, requested a glass of cold water for his lady.

John, who had perceived his lady lying senseless upon the floor, ran down into the kitchen, exclaiming, "That there was an old Irish creature above stairs with his mistress, who looked more like a devil than a woman, and who had been saying, or doing something to her, which had thrown her into fit".

The alarm being thus communicated to the servants, quickly reached Sir Benjamin, who accompanied them to the drawing room, which they reached just as her Ladyship had begun once more to open her eyes.

To Sir Benjamin's inquiry of what was the matter with his wife? which was directed to Mrs. O'Rourke as the apparent cause of her illness, "Oh 'tis nothing but joy; only her joy and satisfaction to be told that she is the mother of her own sweet daughter," she returned.

This declaration was wholly unintelligible to Sir Benjamin; and as he was on the point of replying to it, the sound of his wife's voice turned his attention from Mrs. O'Rourke to her.

"Oh me! dear Sir Benjamin!" exclaimed Lady Buckhurst, "it can't be, it can't be that Amica ain't my daughter, my own dear Amy Dimick!—no, no, I won't believe it; and this here woman says that my daughter is—Oh I can't speak her name—I can't speak her name!"

"Her name is the very same name that she was born by," said Mrs. O'Rourke, "on-

ly 'tis another now, because it has been changed by wedlock.—That's all, my dear," turning to Sir Benjamin as she spoke.

"Don't, *dear* me, woman," retorted Sir Benjamin, "I know nothing about you; I never saw you before in my life that I remember;—what do you *dear* me for?"

"Well, be *aisy*" returned Mrs. O'Rouke in a snappish tone, "I'm not after claiming any affection from you; it is only a bit of the brogue that slips off my tongue's end when I am speaking *arnestly*;—but to be sure," softening her voice again, "your honor is not after pretending to forget to remember Kathleen O'Rouke, though?"

The Knight gave her a look which any common understander of signs would easily have comprehended to mean, that however they might have been acquainted elsewhere, he did not choose to acknowledge her as an acquaintance there:—But however the look, did not produce the desired effect of stopping the volubility of Mrs. O'Rouke, she continued.

"Well, well, if we ain't acquainted now, we shall be this minute, for the young wo-

man that you used to believe to be my daughter, because I adopted her when she was friendless and deserted, is now fully proved and convicted to be the lawful child of your honor's own Ladyship."

Sir Benjamin had undoubtedly, as has already been hinted, been more than once a customer for his gloves at the shop in Old Bond-Street, which was nominally Mrs. Flap's; accordingly he was well acquainted who it was that had hitherto passed for the daughter of Mrs. O'Rourke; and judging that whether the strange declaration she had just made were proved to have any truth in it, or not, it was adviseable not to retain the servants as witnesses to the explanation for which he saw his wife naturally and violently impatient, he directed them to leave the room.

The moment the door was closed upon the domestics, Lady Buckhurst repeated her incredulity relative to Amiea's not being her real daughter, and accused Mrs. O'Rourke of having some sinister motive in view, in the attempts she was making to gain her credit to an opposite opinion. "you want to

get some money out of me to make you hold your tongue, as you think," exclaimed her Ladyship, "but I see through your wicked design, and I won't be imposed upon."

The word wicked, most violently disconcerted the honorable Irish woman, and with a thundering oath to prove her innocence, she said, "I say *your* daughter is Mrs. Block."

"Block!—what do you mean by that?" cried Sir Benjamin, "there is a hole in your ballad already; you said Mrs. Flap was her Ladyship's daughter this minute."

"And did not I say likewise this minute, that she had changed her name in holy wedlock?" exclaimed Mrs. O' Rouke, "and I hope there is no disgrace in that; but you may have a nearer guess at that yourself, for you have been longer acquainted with her husband than I have."

"I acquainted with her husband?" echoed the Knight.

"You ain't going to be after forgetting to remember Mr. Jarvis Block too are you, in the same manner as you were going to *sarve* poor Kathleen; are you?" enquired Mrs. O' Rouke.

“Jarvis Block married to Mrs. Flap!” ejaculated Sir Benjamin in surprise; it was not, however, with equal surprise that his lady heard this piece of information, as she had already received the intelligence from the fountain head on leaving Covent Garden theatre a few nights before;—our readers too, we suspect, may have guessed this to be the case some time before Lady Buckhurst knew such an event to have taken place; in order therefore that we may proceed regularly with our history, we shall beg permission to dedicate a few pages to the courtship of this amiable couple, and the circumstances which attended their nuptials, a knowledge of which will be found a necessary key to the tale which our readers will be called upon to listen to from the lips of Mrs. O’Rouke.

The circumstance of Jarvis Block’s introduction to a female at Lady Dellaval’s masquerade, whom he found in the chamber into which he ran to escape quizzing, is probably not forgotten; and we judge it equally probable that some of our keen-sighted readers may long ago have conceived this female to be Mrs. Flap; however, whatever may have been their sentiments upon the

business, our own time is now come for declaring, that notwithstanding Sidney Valmont's assertion to Maurice Stanton, that there were none but women of character at the fête, Mrs. Flap it was—Valmont, however, was thus far justified, in his assertion, that no others had received tickets from her Ladyship; but women of Mrs. Flap's stamp have always friends in the lower, as well as in the upper house of most families; and through the interest of Lady Dellaval's butler, who ranked in the list of Mrs. Flap's friends of this description, she was admitted to a sight of the evening's revelry.

Having mixed for nearly two hours with the company, during which her mask had concealed her from their knowledge; by the favour of Mrs. Archer, who cast an eye of love at the butler, and was, therefore, willing to accommodate his friends, Mrs. Flap was admitted to a chamber in order to divest herself of her masquerade habit, and equip her person for returning home: whilst thus employed, in burst upon her, as has already been related, Jarvis Block: she addressed him;—he replied—and finding him to be an utter stranger to the ways of the great city,

she regarded him as one from whose acquaintance she might derive some profit, and therefore made an offer of procuring for him a change of dress, and escorting him back to the rooms of entertainment, judging that with adroit management, she would not be a loser by her pains.

Block in the relation he made of that evening's occurrence to Sidney Valmont and Maurice Stanton, has said, that his fair incognita left him for a few minutes, during which she addressed herself to a mask habited in a black domino, and that on her return to him, she called him by his name; this mask was no other than Colonel Buckhurst, whom Mrs. Flap recognised notwithstanding his disguise, and to whom she felt no reluctance to discover her being where she was; and he informed her that her beau was Mr. Block.

Now little as Jarvis Block might suppose himself to be known in the world of fashionables, the fame of his empty head, and full purse, had still reached the lounging rooms of Mrs. Flap, where every article of scandal and news was discussed, if it originated in truth; and if it were a fabulous creation,



nine times out of ten in these rooms it was fabricated.

Upon learning from the Colonel, with whom she was so extraordinarily become acquainted, it immediately entered the plotting brain of Mrs. Flap, that whether she failed or succeeded in her attempt, it was at least worth her while to try whether she could not turn her introduction to Jarvis Block to a better account than merely any trivial remuneration which he might make her for a few hours pleasantly spent in her society; accordingly keeping close to his side, and using her time to advantage, by inspiring him with the idea that she was of no mean rank, and extremely charmed with him; she with regret received the signal for her departure in the throwing open of the supper rooms, in which she durst not venture to appear, and was therefore obliged to make a precipitate escape for that night from her admirer.

Mr. Block on his return home on the evening of that day on which he had communicated his adventure at the masquerade to Sidney Valmont and Maurice Stanton, received a note which bore on it the two-penny post mark; it was the hand of a lady he per-

ceived, and on breaking the seal he found the contents to be these,

“ SIR,

“ I promised you last night at Lady Del-  
“ laval’s ~~masquerade~~, as how you should see  
“ me *agin*—as a woman of *oner*, I am bound  
“ to keep my word, so inform you that I  
“ live at No. —, Old Bond-street, where  
“ you *has* my permission to call on me, Sir,

“ Your servant,

“ CECILIA CADOGAN.”

Mr. Block was in raptures with this epistle; he was not himself so correct either in his spelling, or style of composition, as particularly, if at all, to remark the inaccuracies of his correspondent; and on the following morning about one o’clock, he proceeded to pay her a visit; the number to which he was directed in Old Bond-street, he found upon a door which he did not suspect to form a part of the adjoining dwelling, which was a milliner’s shop.

On delivering his name to a servant in livery, who opened the door, he was shewn into an apartment on the first floor, elegantly

furnished, where he was received by Mrs. Flap, who introduced him to an elderly female who sat netting by the fire, as her mother, the Countess of Cadogan; a title in which it will be easily guessed that Mrs. O'Rourke, like the jay in peacock's feathers, had dressed herself.

Jarvis Block was by no means the man to strip her of them; he was delighted with the attentions and civilities of the old lady; and charmed into the most violent passion by the affability and accomplishments of the (young one).—Matters continued in this state for nearly a week, during which period Block had paid them two morning visits, and as often sipped Souchong with them in an evening, when he proposed escorting them to the play.—Miss Cecilia declared herself willing to be guided by her mamma; and the Countess declined his offer in a manner which induced him to believe it only wanted to be pressed to be accepted.—Accordingly he repeated his invitation, and whilst he was thus employed, Cecilia left the room.

When she was gone, the pretended Countess said, "That Mr. Block must pardon what she was going to say;—that she was

*sartain* as far as her opinion went, that he appeared in every respect a gentleman, and a man of honour; but that still as he was only an acquaintance *promiscuously* made by her daughter at a masquerade, she could not consent that Cecilia should go into public with him, till he had explained to her what were the motives of his constant visits to their lodgings."

Mr. Block replied, "That he was glad the conversation had led to an explanation of those motives; that he should be one of the happiest men alive, if the beautiful Miss Cadogan would accept him as her husband."

The Countess replied, "That the proposition was very hasty; but that she had received a most favourable report of Mr. Block's character and circumstances from some of her friends, of which," she said, "she had taken care to apprise herself, previously to permitting her daughter to address to him the note which he had about eight days ago received from her; and that therefore she could only say, that the decision of his fate must rest entirely with Cecilia herself."

Block answered, "That he flattered himself the young lady did not see him with perfect indifference ; and begged of her mother to become the mediator of his cause."

The delicate Countess replied "that she must decline that office, as in case of a refusal on the part of her daughter, she wished him to be fully persuaded that she had not been prejudiced one way or the other by her advice," and then added, "I will ring the bell and send word to my daughter, that I wish her to come down stairs again ; and when she enters, I will give you the opportunity you desire, by leaving you alone with her."

Jarvis Block with uncontrolled thankfulness and joy, rose to ring the bell for her ; the Countess desired him to desist a moment longer ; she wished to tell him, she said, that she was a *parson* of the same honour of which she found him to be ; that therefore she must candidly inform him, that she had nothing to give her daughter during her life time, and little at her death ;—she was to be sure a Countess, but she was the dowager Countess of the family ; her husband who had been in the army had made but slender sayings, either from his hereditary income or

his profession, and had not left her more than would enable her to support herself comfortably as a widow in the style in which it was consistent for a woman of her rank to live."

The unsuspecting Jarvis received all her declaration as gospel, and telling her that he had enough of his own, that all he wanted with a wife were a few such accomplishments as singing and dancing, and *genteel* dressing, in which he considered Miss Cecilia to excel, he should be proud to maintain her in a handsome style, and open his door with a hearty welcome to her mother, as often as she chose to visit them at Worthing.

The bell was now pulled; and the Countess rose to leave the room immediately upon her accomplished daughter's entering it; Jarvis and she being left together unrestrained by the observation of a third person; a few short sentences served him to disclose his affection, and his liberal intentions concerning her, if she vouchsafed to become his wife; and the lady, with a very well acted imitation of a modest and diffident air, confessed that he had won her heart from the first moment of her beholding him, and consented to make the experiment of wedlock.

Jarvis was in raptures; he even ventured to seal the bond with a kiss fervently imprinted upon her rosy lips; and as no scandal could now attach itself to their being seen in public together, the Countess consented to accompany them to the play.—But alas! in the evening she was seized with so violent a head-ache, as prevented her from keeping her promise; and even now, though they were acknowledged lovers, her Ladyship said, she did not *consave* it decorous to suffer her daughter to be seen in public with Mr. Block, unshielded by her protective wing; and therefore the fond pair were obliged to pour forth their sighs in the drawing-room, instead of the theatre.

It had been as necessary a piece of finesse in Mrs. O'Rourke (we beg her pardon, the Countess Cadogan) to consent to the play going scheme, as to prevent its being put into execution.—Had Jarvis Block there met any of his friends, who happened at the same time to be the friends of Mrs. Flap, the chances appeared infinitely in favour of a precipitate destruction of her daughter's hopes—the only secure method therefore was to prevent the possibility of such an un-

fortunate rencontre ; and to this end the apology of the head-ache was successfully called in.

The Countess's head-ache proved a very obstinate one ; the many little medicines which she professed herself for several days to be taking were insufficient to remove it ; and as she could not be prevailed upon to suffer the indecorum of her daughter's going alone into public with Mr. Block till after their marriage ; and as there appeared to Mr. Block very little chance of her being shortly able to accompany them ; he pressed for the marriage to take place immediately.

Mrs. O'Rourke used every argument she could devise to prevail upon the impatient lover to defer his nuptials till he was able to leave town, which he had informed her his business would for another fortnight prevent his doing ; and when she found that he continued resolute in not delaying the period of his happiness, she informed him, that he must provide apartments to take his bride to, as it was not in her power to offer them a bed in the lodgings she was now in ; as she was in possession of only one chamber, (except those occupied by her servants) in



which she and her daughter slept together. The expence of handsome lodgings for a fortnight, was another feather in Block's estimation of expences, so this point was quickly settled.

"Where would his Cecilia wish her lodgings to be situated?" was the next inquiry of the accommodating lover; and she replied, "That she thought if he could succeed in procuring apartments in any of the environs, it might be of infinite service to her mother's health to accompany them thither." Block agreed with her in opinion, utterly unsuspecting of the concealed cause by which she was actuated in making this request; namely that of keeping herself as retired as possible from an exposure of her real rank and circumstances, and the next day he procured pleasant accommodations at Islington.

Having provided a habitation for his bride, Block immediately procured a licence, and all the marriage ceremonies followed in regular succession except the honey-moon, which the perversity of the fates by which the bridegroom's life was regulated doomed to continue only three days; on the last of which, as

he was entering the door of his lodgings, he was stopped by two men, who inquired if his name was not Jarvis Block? He unsuspectingly replied in the affirmative, and they then produced a bill of seventy pounds due to a wine-merchant, of which they demanded from him the payment.

In the greatest astonishment he denied all knowledge of such a debt, and asked upon what grounds they made the demand: One of the men replied, "That every husband was responsible for the debts of his wife, and that the money was due to his employer from Mrs. Block." Jarvis cast his eye over the bill, and perceived that the first line ran thus, "Mrs. Flap debtor to Mr. Oporto."—"What do you mean by my wife?" he exclaimed; "the debtor's name in this bill is Flap: my wife's maiden name was Cadogan."

"I know nothing about her maiden name," replied one of the strangers; "she was Mrs. Flap long enough before you married her. She has humbugged us out of our money for the last three years, by pretending that her husband was alive in America, upon which account we had no right to touch her person;

but it is plain enough now, since she is married to you, that she only tricked us, and that he is either dead, or that she never was his wife at all."

Mr. Block persisted in his story, and his informers in theirs. In great consternation the bridegroom ran to seek his wife, and inquire into the true state of the case. Her eloquent mother took upon herself the explanation: she said, "That her daughter had been so unfortunate as to have been the wife of a first husband, whose name had been Flap; and of which marriage she had not informed him, *because* Mr. Flap had turned out a very bad man, who had used her daughter *extramely* ill, and that it gave Cecilia great pain even to this moment to hear him mentioned; and that she had on that account taken her maiden name again the moment of his death."

Jarvis was not a little surprised by this account of his dear Cecilia having been a widow, previously to her becoming his rib; but more intent at this moment upon the business depending than the knowledge he had so unexpectedly gained, he proceeded to inquire, "On what account the wine-bill was

drawn in her name, and not in that of **her** late husband?"

The reply was, "That she had been always in the habit of conducting the house-keeping, and that therefore the articles had been ordered in her name."

"But they were ordered during the lifetime of your husband, were they not?" asked Block.

"Of that," she replied, "she could not be certain, as her husband had died abroad, and she could not exactly ascertain when; and thus had ordered whatever she had purchased in the name of Flap, till within a few weeks of the present time."

To the great disquietude of his mind, poor Block perceived that there were some secrets in the history of his wife; but not so very unlettered in the ways of the world as to believe that his union with a widow could make him accountable for the debts of that widow's first husband, he peremptorily refused to pay the bill.

The two men, one of whom was the friend of Mr. Oporto, and the other an attorney employed by him, departed with reluctance,

and in the afternoon Mr. Block was served with a writ to appear on the following morning and answer to the debt.

"As matters are," said Mrs. O'Rourke, "I would advise you to pay the bill, if they were not tolerably secure that they had justice on their side, they would not dare to send you a writ: and if the action is commenced, it will only add considerably to the expence: you know when you made your first proposals to me about Cecilia, you told me you had plenty of money."

Block did not at all like this remark on the part of the pretended Countess: it strengthened his suspicions that he was not acquainted with the whole of hers or of his wife's characters, and he said, "If I have ever so much money, I shan't spend it in such a foolish way as that. My wife must inform me at what church she was married to her first husband, and I shall procure a copy of the marriage certificate from the register, which I doubt not will be sufficient to release me from all obligation of paying her debts."

Mrs. Block said she had been married to Mr. Flap at Saint James's church.

Jarvis immediately left home, in pursuit of the clerk of Saint James's parish; intending, if he found the marriage in the register, to refer himself to the clergyman who officiated at the church for a copy of it: after some time he succeeded in finding the clerk; he paid the fee, and the register was laid open to his inspection; but neither the name of Flap nor that of Cadogan were to be found in it, and the clerk understanding what was the object of Mr. Block's search, informed him that he had held his office in that parish for upwards of twenty years, and that he was certain no marriage in either of those names, had in the course of that time taken place in that church.

The disappointed Block was upon this information obliged to leave the church; he had a bill of his own to settle at the hotel in Oxford-street, where he had lodged previously to his marriage, and on his return from it through Bond street, too much engaged with his own thoughts to attend to the objects or persons whom he was passing, he was awakened from his reflections by a slap upon the shoulder, which was given by the hand of Sidney Valmont.

They both stopped, and whilst exchanging the common questions of the day, Valmont pointing with his cane across the street, exclaimed, "*Diantre*, what is the matter at *Madame Flap's*?" The name acted like a stroke of electricity upon Jarvis Block; but his emotion was unperceived by Valmont, who had now raised his glass to his eye, and said, "'Gad; only think of that, a bankrupt, upon my soul!"

Block directed his eyes the same way that Sidney Valmont's were turned, and perceived that they were fixed upon the very milliner's shop above which had lived the Countess of Cadogan and her daughter, previously to the marriage of the latter with himself; and behind some panes in the windows of which there were notices now affixed, that the stock was selling off at prime cost for the benefit of the creditors.

Scarcely able to command his utterance, still resolved to gain what information lay in his power, Block said, "Do you know the person that keeps that shop?"

"Oh, yes!" returned Sidney; "she is known by half the town: the milliner's shop was all a hum: her real business was enter-

taining company in some snug rooms she had above."

"Entertaining company!" echoed Block, who believed himself fully to comprehend Valmont's meaning, but still chose to be perfectly certain that his comprehension was just: "entertaining company?"

"*Oui*," replied Valmont; "*tête-à-tête* company: only visitors in pairs: *comprenez vous mon ami*?"

"Was she a widow?" asked Block.

"Oh, no!" answered Sidney, "her real name is O'Rouke, but she called herself Flap, because a man of that name once kept her, and she pretended to be his wife to keep off the duns; but you perceive, *c'en est fait*, it is all up with her at last."

Poor Jarvis now lost all power of speaking at all.

"*Apropos*," continued Valmont, "Have you seen any more of the fair incognita who stole your heart at the masquerade?"

But luckily for Block, he was spared a reply, by Sidney perceiving a Knight of his acquaintance on the other side of the street; and being one of these common, but little minds, which always fly from Commoners to



**K**nights, from Knights to Lords, from Lords to Dukes, and from Dukes to Princes, if they are fortunate enough to have the opportunity, regularly attaching themselves to the highest in rank, he hastily bade Block farewell, and ran to enjoy the luxury of moving by the side of a title.

## CHAPTER II.

*Perplexities increase.*

THIS discovery was enough to rouse the lion in any man who under all other events of an adverse nature could have preserved the mildness of a lamb—not that we mean to say that Mr. Block's temper was of this passive kind, he had as much of the fire of anger implanted in his breast as falls to the lot of any one human being, though perhaps not at all more; and returning home in a pitch of passion, to which he himself scarcely believed it possible for any occurrence to have wound him up, he accused his wife and her mother of the infamy of their conduct towards him in terms of so great violence and firmness, that they perceived the hour was come when "Greek met Greek, and brought the tug of war."

The only resource which was left for the females in the present crisis of affairs was to bluster, and endeavour to intimidate Block; accordingly they both assailed him in strains which fully proved to him the account which Sidney Valmont had given of their infamous characters. "What in the name of the *proker* can it signify to you," exclaimed Mrs. O'Rouke, her passion rendering her Irish brogue as strong again as it had before appeared, "whether my daughter's name is Cadogan, or Flap, or O'Rouke, or O'Devil? did not you say all you wanted in marriage was a *genteel* wife, and have you not got one?—and what would you be after desiring more?"

When the mother stopped to draw her breath, the daughter took care that Block's ears should not enjoy a respite: "A week or two ago," she said, "you could not praise my *gentility* enough; and pray, because my name before I married you, was not exactly the one you thought it, do I walk less *genteel*, or dance less *genteel*, or talk less *genteel* for that, I should like to know?"

Now (two female tongues are in most cases more than a match for one man; and their

advantage rises to its greatest height, when they contend for the rights of a wife in the event of a man having made an 'unfortunate bargain in the way of matrimony, in a country where he must either sit down patiently to bewail his infelicity, or ruin himself by procuring a divorce.—However this is not a book wherein it is meant to give a treatise on the *force* of female reasoning—equally out of place would it be to fill our pages with a lamentation that the tie of matrimony should not be dissoluble without an injury to the purse of either of the parties whom it binds together, the moment the one becomes unworthy of the other's countenance.—We have here only to state, that reduced as near despair as any event could sink the spirits of Jarvis Block, by the discovery of his wife's circumstances, whom he had married just in time to save from a jail, by becoming responsible in the character of her husband, for her debts; he judged it advisable to combat as well as he was able against the existing evil, by not suffering the tax upon his purse to grow larger than was absolutely necessary, and therefore immediately stopped the threat-

ened action of the wine merchant, by paying his bill.

But alas ! one creditor being satisfied, two others, urged on by the success of the first claimant, made their appearance.—This had been a matter not wholly unsuspected by Block after the explanation which had taken place between himself and his new relations ; and still attached to the person of his wife, notwithstanding the proofs he had received of her infamy ; for such instances, however uncommon, are still not without parallel ; he desired her to tell him candidly at once, what were her debts, that he might pay them off, and have done with the business.

He supposed it impossible that the debts of one who had been a milliner, even with the addition of her dabbings in a second avocation, could exceed two, or at most three hundred pounds ; the lady however had the modesty to declare, they amounted to twice that sum ; still in order to patch up in the best manner he was able his bad bargain, the poor husband subdued his mounting bile, and went on patiently paying for piping to which he had not danced, till the claims upon him became so very numerous and exor-

bitant, that his own private fund was entirely expended ; and his employers having gained a hint of his circumstances, refused to answer his drafts upon them for money in advance.

In this dilemma the unfortunate Jarvis was himself threatened with that captivity from which his infamous wife had so narrowly escaped ; at one moment he thought of setting out post haste for Worthing, and leaving her and her creditors behind him ; but at the next he considered that they both could, and probably would follow him ; and also that it was most adviseable for him to keep his eye upon his treacherous rib ;—he had yet one string to his bow in the affairs of the pocket, and this one string it was left him, as his only resource, to draw.

It is now become necessary to explain, what has perhaps long been suspected, that in the intimacy which has been seen to subsist between Colonel Buckhurst and Jarvis Block, the latter was made a tool of utility by his pretended friend :—the Colonel being a man of the most unbounded extravagance, was in the habit of very frequently finding himself extremely at a loss when he happen-

ted to want an hundred or two of loose guineas for any immediate purpose.—His first introduction to Block, had been, as the landlord at Worthing long ago informed Maurice Stanton, at Smoothurf races; where he had offered him a bet which he had won of him; and the Colonel remarking the indifference with which he bore his loss, in addition to the simplicity of his character, which he found to be totally deficient in a knowledge of what is called *life*, immediately resolved to fasten upon him as a pigeon.

At picquet and other games the Colonel for some time contrived to make very pretty picking of his new friend; till their intimacy increasing, he ventured to request of him the loan of a few hundreds upon bond.—Block, proud of the honour of lending money to a man of the Colonel's consequence in the world, and too well acquainted who were his family to entertain the least fear of not recovering his money whenever he chose to demand it, became a ready lender; and previously to the time of Sir Benjamin's taking his seat in parliament, the Colonel was already two thousand and five hundred pounds in debt to Block, which was agreed to be re-

turned upon demand with whatever interest might be due upon it.

Although a partner in his father's house, the Colonel was restricted in his drafts to a certain annual amount ; and it so happened that at the time of his sending his *carte blanche* to Madame Le Blanc, he was barely in possession of one thousand pounds, which he judged to be a sum extremely inadequate to the demand that he supposed the enchanting little French woman would make for her smiles ;—the idea of Block's purse presented itself to him as his resource ; and supposing that Madame Le Blanc would not exact less than two, or perhaps three thousand pounds, he resolved to borrow a couple more of his convenient friend : to this end he invited Block to dine that day at his father's house in Hanover-square, and the moment he arrived, the Colonel took him, as we have already seen, into his father's study for the purpose of private communication.—Block happened at this time to be but low in the pocket himself, which caused him to start some objections to the business, that occasioned a delay very unfavourable to the delicacies of Lady Buckhurst's dinner ; but



The promise of a ticket for Lady Dellaval's masquerade turned the tide of affairs in favour of the Colonel, who received from Block a draft upon his banker to the desired amount, which the Colonel took care to dispatch an emissary to turn into money, before the banking shops were closed that evening.

In the present sad state to which Block's affairs were reduced; and which calamity he would in all probability, he now considered, have escaped, had he not been so eager for a ticket to introduce him at the masquerade, no mode of relief presented itself to him but to seek the Colonel, and make a serious demand of him for the restitution of all, or at least some part of the sums with which he had at different times accommodated him.

Block accordingly proceeded to Sir Benjamin's, and being resolute in not accepting a denial to his seeing the Colonel, was ushered into his bed room, where being left alone with him, he made known the business upon which he had been so urgent to be admitted into his presence.—The Colonel declared he was extremely sorry for his unfortunate situation, but that he could not at that time command one hundred pounds, nor

should he be able in some weeks.—Block remonstrated, “What,” he said, “could be become of the two thousand which he had lent him the evening before he was wounded; and which could not have been from that very circumstance, applied to the purpose for which he had borrowed them?”

The Colonel answered, and he spoke the truth, that the moment his death had been apprehended, he had himself been persecuted by a great many claimants for money, who had been in fear of not being paid their debts, if he did not live to pay them himself, and that he had quieted them with the two thousand pounds of which Block spoke.

Unable to make any impression upon the feelings of the Colonel, Block departed, vowing vengeance against the house in which he was a partner; and threatening to arrest Sir Benjamin himself, who was now no longer defended from such an assault by holding a seat in the senate.

Block returned home, and spent the afternoon in execrating love, marriage, and friendship, with which objects of his denunciation, he coupled Mrs. O'Rourke, his wife,

and the Colonel ;—a cup of tea cooled him for reflection and action, and as he was on the point of setting out in quest of a solicitor to undertake for him the recovery of his property from the Colonel, he was informed that there was a gentleman below who called himself Demur, and who wished to see him. —Suspecting every one that professed business with him to be another creditor of his wife's, Block refused to see him ; but a second message that he came from Colonel Buckhurst, caused him immediately to retract his first order.

We gave our readers a little insight into the character of Mr. Demur, at the time of his visit to Colonel Buckhurst, which took place immediately after the departure of Jarvis Block ; when it will be remembered that he and the Colonel were heard to be very merry, and apparently well satisfied with their meeting.

Block descended into a lower apartment, where he received the lawyer alone : “ I am come, Sir,” said the latter, “ to warn you from any proceedings at law against my client Colonel Charles Buckhurst ; he desires me

to say that he will in his own time satisfactorily refund to you the principal which he has borrowed from you, and pay you the interest for the same as agreed upon between yourselves; but that he admonishes you for your own sake not to attempt to recover it till his time for payment arrives."

Block could scarcely command his patience to wait the conclusion of this address, and when it was finished replied, "That whatever the Colonel might think, he was not so great a fool as to be intimidated by any of his threats from making attempts to recover what was his own; and that he might return and tell him so."

"Well, Sir," rejoined Mr. Demur, "in order fully to execute the commission of my client, it now becomes my business to explain to you *why* he warns you against such attempts;—are you aware that if you persist in your intention of suing him, he has it in his power to render you amenable to the laws of your country?"

"What do you mean by that, Sir?" exclaimed Block, not less indignant at having such a suspicion hinted at concerning him.

self, than astonished whence could arise Mr. Demur's courage to pronounce such a hint to his very face.

"Why, Sir," rejoined Mr. Demur, "are you not acquainted that the legal interest of this kingdom is five per cent; and you have lent various sums to Coloael Buckhurst at six, and he is in possession of the articles of agreement with your name signed to them by your own hand; do you now perceive the hold he has upon you?"

Poor Block was thunder-struck at the conviction which now reached his senses of the enormity of the treachery which had been exercised against him in the name of friendship.—Whenever the Colonel had borrowed sums of money of him, he had always insisted on the bond being drawn for one per cent beyond the permitted standard, telling the credulous Block, that without making him something more than the ordinary compensation for the use of his money, he could not be satisfied to accept loans of him at all; and now, when it was too late, Block perceived the iniquitous motive of the Colonel's feigned generosity, exercised in

order to obtain the scandalous power of intimidating him from demanding the restitution of his own property.

These are the instances of an unprincipled blackness of soul ! of a selfish criminality of heart ! which deserve the contempt of society, and the scourge of offended justice to fall upon them with double the weight with which they sink upon the being who robs openly on the highway without any mask to shield him from the prosecution of those whom he attacks.

Mr. Demur being satisfied that his client's adversary was convinced of the force of his iniquitous arguments, departed, and returning home, eat his supper with his usual appetite, or perhaps with rather a better than his usual one ; being well pleased that he had succeeded in his embassy to the wish of his employer.—There is some difficulty in believing that there are human beings so lost to a sense of what is right, and commendable in man, as to defend with eagerness and spirit the wicked actions which they have themselves committed.—But, great God ! how dreadful is the reflection, that in a chris-

Man country, there should be human beings to be found, who will for pay, defend the crimes of others for them !

For a length of time Block continued alone, a prey to the most tormenting reflections ;—it was near midnight, when almost delirious with the joint effects of his own thoughts, and of several large bumpers of brandy which he had swallowed, he returned to the apartment where sat his wife and her mother, whose offences towards him he had now almost forgotten in the more recent injury he had sustained from the Colonel ;—he placed himself before the supper-table, but it was in vain that he attempted to eat ; he could only drink ; and his draughts were interrupted by invectives which he poured out against the name of the Colonel.

Mrs. O'Rourke and her daughter heard these left hand blessings bestowed on their old friend, with surprise and silence.

Block continued to rail at the Buckhursts, " Sir Benjamin," he said he believed to be as great a rogue as his son ; he did not think there was one of the name good for any thing ; unless indeed it was his old acquaintance her Ladyship ; at least she had been

reckoned a good sort of woman when she was the widow Dimick."

"What's that you say?" exclaimed Mrs. O'Rourke, "Does yourself know a lady that either is, or was a widow of the name of Dimick?"

There was an earnestness in her manner whilst she demanded these questions, that claimed Block's attention, and in few words he told her what he knew of the *ci-devant* Mrs. Dimick.

"Ay, a Devonshire lady," cried Mrs. O'Rourke, "and she lost a daughter, a female child, when she was a small young thing?"

"And found her again when she was grown up," added Block snappishly, "and what does that signify to you or me?"

"More than any thing else in this blessed world:" cried the Irish dame, "it may be the means of lifting us up out of all our mishaps, for whoever it may be that Lady Buckhurst pleases to call her daughter, daughter of her's she is not; for her daughter is your wife, and nobody else!"

Block could scarcely credit his senses; the events of the few last days of his life appeared to him like a dream; and all his faculty



of thought was lost in contemplating them. That his wife, and not Amica, was the lost daughter of Lady Buckhurst, appeared to him an incredible assertion; and he said, "You have told me so many lies since I knew you, that I don't know how to believe a word either of you speak."

Mrs. O'Rourke swore by every power she could think of, that she was not deceiving him now, whatever she might have done before; and then entered into an explanation, which will in due time be laid before our readers, and which inclined him to believe that her declaration was not false.

"In the morning," Mrs. O'Rourke said, "you shall go with me to her Ladyship, and we'll be after letting her know who is who."

"Why, if my wife is indeed the lost Miss Dimick" said Block—Mrs. O'Rourke interrupted him by again swearing that such was actually and truly the case—"I may," continued Block, "be better off in the end than I expected, for it was reported all over Devonshire, that her father left her twenty thousand pounds to be paid her when

she came of age, if ever she was found again."

When the morning arrived, Mrs. O'Rourke desired Jarvis Block, instead of accompanying her to Lady Buckhurst's to proceed to the commons, and procure a sight of the late Mr. Dimick's will; to which proposition he agreed, and was on the point of setting out when he received a gentle tap upon the shoulder from another of his wife's creditors, and not being possessed of the means of effecting his release, he was immediately conducted to prison.

Mrs. O'Rourke bid him keep up his spirits, "for the faster they came, the sooner they would have done coming; and that she would go in his stead to the commons, and let him know the result of her investigation before she went to Lady Buckhurst."—She consequently lost no time in setting out on her errand of inquiry, and having found a clause in the will of the deceased Mr. Dimick, answerable to her expectations, she dispatched a note to that purpose to Block; and then proceeded into Hanover Square.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*Which is which.*

**W**E left Sir Benjamin, and Lady Buckhurst anxiously expecting from the lips of Mrs O'Rourke, an account of herself, and of the female with whom we have hitherto been best acquainted by the name of Mrs. Flap; the substance of her explanation was as follows, "She was," she said, "the daughter of an Irishman of her own name," (for she did not pretend ever to have enjoyed the rights of matrimony,) "who at the time of her birth, lived by cultivating a few acres of land, his sole property, situated, on what she termed, the far side of the Liffey; that while she was yet young her mother had died; and her father becoming unsettled in consequence of her loss, had enlisted into an English regiment then quartered in Ireland, in which he had been

rapidly advanced to the situation of a serjeant; about three years after the period of his becoming a soldier, his regiment had been remanded to England, and she and her sister Norah, his only children, had crossed the sea with him."

Having arrived thus far in her narrative, Mrs. O'Rourke appeared, if we may be allowed the expression, rather shy of giving a very minute detail of the history of her family at this juncture; she merely observed that her father had died very shortly after his arrival in England, and that her sister and herself, having formed different connexions in their endeavours to provide for themselves, had been separated for a considerable length of time.

"Thirteen years ago," she proceeded to say, "just after she had settled herself in a *nice* little shop in the millinery business; but not in Bond Street, nor in so elegant a style as she had lately carried on the trade, she had one day met in the street her sister, who was leaning on the arm of a gentleman, whom by his appearance, she had at first believed to be a *clergy*-man, till informed that he was not so, and that her sister

told her, he was her husband—They expressed pleasure at seeing her, and invited her to their lodgings, where a very pretty girl of about eight years old attracted her notice, who her sister said was her own child.

“ Three years subsequent to this period passed on, during which Mrs. O'Rourke and her sister continued to reside in London in separate habitations, and accidentally to see each other ; at the expiration of that time Norah coming one day to call upon her, told her that her husband had been called abroad by a sudden obligation of attending in person to a concern in which he was engaged upon the continent, and that during the time of his absence, she should very much like to bring her child with her, and reside as a lodger in the house of her sister.

“ For twenty months, Norah, who called herself Mrs. Preston, continued to live with her sister, giving her occasionally assistance in the conduct of her business, when she was seized with the small pox ; Mrs. O'Rourke inquired of her immediately, whether she did not consider it right to remove her child, lest it should catch the infection ; she replied, “ that if she looked at

Cecilia's arm, she would perceive that she had already undergone inoculation." The disorder with which Norah was seized affected her in the severest manner, and at the expiration of fourteen days, it was pronounced by her physician impossible for her to recover.

"Mrs. Preston desired to know the truth of her own case, and being informed by her sister, that her death was in all human probability, inevitable, she said, "I shall leave no one but yourself behind to lament me; at least no relation."———"What! not your husband, and child?" exclaimed Mrs. O'Rourke.

"Oh no," replied Norah, "I must relieve my mind by confessing the truth to you before I die;—Preston is not my husband; nor is Cecilia my child."

"Mrs. O'Rourke expressed her astonishment, and her sister proceeded to inform her, "that very shortly after they had by the death of their father been separated from each other, she had been reduced by ill fortune to join a gang of gypsies, one of whom she had married; that soon after her admission into this society, as none of them

were mothers, they had been much in want of two or three children to assist them in exciting the compassion of those of whom they asked charity; and to this end they were all directed by the leader of the gang to steal the first children they could lay their hands upon.—Judging whatever their director commanded them, to be right, Norah and her companions had kept upon the constant look out for infants to kidnap, and it was her chance to steal a female child from a lady in Devonshire, whose name she had understood was Dimick.”

“A few months after this, her gypsey husband died; and she formed a connexion with a man of the name of Preston, of infinitely superior circumstances to her own, who took her away from the society in which he had found her, and brought her with him to London; and having conceived an affection for the child which she had stolen, and expressed great reluctance to part from it, Preston had allowed her to retain it under her care—where he now was, she knew not; she had never heard from him since the time that he had told her he was

going abroad, at which period she had become a resident in her sister's house.—She requested Mrs. O'Rourke, if ever she saw him again, to tell him that he had her best wishes—and besought her to give her protection to Cecilia; which Mrs. O'Rourke promised to do; and a few hours after Norah had received her promise to that effect, she died."

Here ended Mrs. O'Rourke's story, and she added "that ever since the death of her sister, she had used every means in her power for endeavouring to find out the parents of the child, in order that she might restore it to them, with an explanation of the accident by which she had become its protectress; but that till the night before, she had never been able to hear of any lady who either did, or had borne the name of Dimick."

Had Mrs. O'Rourke spoken the exact truth she would have said, "That having added another profession to that of milliner about the time her sister died, and judging that Cecilia, as she had been called by Mrs. Preston, who was then a very fine looking girl of about twelve years old, might in the course of time grow up to be of infinite ser-



vice to her in her various lines of business, in the character of her daughter; she had by this selfish, and scandalous hope, been withheld from making those inquiries which if properly set on foot, would in all probability have succeeded in restoring the child to her real mother. But Mrs. O'Rouke, upheld, not only by the natural audacity of her character, but also by a consciousness that no proof could be adduced of her not having attempted to discover for the child her parents, had without fear entered the presence of her natural protector, the moment she saw an advantage to be derived from a confession of the truth.

With quivering lips, and the orbs of her eyes apparently immoveable, Lady Buckhurst listened to the Irishwoman's tale, and when it was concluded, no change took place in her countenance; she sat as if bereaved of every faculty; whilst Mrs. O'Rouke, with the same cool and undaunted firmness which had throughout marked her conduct, proceeded to recount by what means she had become acquainted with the inheritance due to Miss Dimick, now Mrs. Block, on her coming of age; and to inquire how

far distant that period was, as Mrs. Block and her husband were both in great want of money.

No answer was returned to this question, and Mrs. O'Rourke said, "Oh if you don't choose to tell me, there is nothing to be done, but to find out where she took her christening, and write down for a copy of the register."

A pause ensued—Sir Benjamin broke it, "If this person you speak of, is really Lady Buckhurst's daughter," he said, "can you tell us who the girl Amica is, that Mr. Leuwitzer has imposed upon us for her?"

"How should myself know that, I'd like to hear!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Rourke, "they can't both be one *parson* without they were the same woman; and have I not plainly proved to you that they can't be that?"

"I should not wonder," cried Sir Benjamin, whose resentment against Mr. Leuwitzer on account of his charity to the Le Blancs, was not yet cooled, "I should not wonder, if he had taken this way of turning over to us some poor relation, or some

natural child of his own, or his sister's, of somebody's; but I know how long she has been in this family to a day; and I'll be repaid the expences of her maintenance, if I sue him for them at law."

"But," said Lady Buckhurst, "if Amica is not my daughter, how could it come to pass, that Mr. Leuwitzer should have found my thimble, and my tea-spoon, and my toothpick case, in the same room where he found her?"

"Phoo!" cried Sir Benjamin, "do you think there are no more toothpick cases, or tea spoons, marked with A D, besides yours? neither is it impossible, but that he might have heard the story of what you lost with your child, and have had such articles made on purpose to impose upon you."

"No, I can't think Mr. Leuwitzer could be such a bad man as that," replied her Ladyship.

"Have you told us all you know about your sister, and her stealing the child?—are you sure of that?" asked Sir Benjamin.

• “ Every word,” Mrs. O’Rouke replied ; “ but she was willing to take her oath upon what she had told them, before any magistrate in the kingdom.”

“ God knows, nobody was ever in such a confusion, as my head is in,” cried her Ladyship ; “ Lord have mercy upon me !”

“ If Mrs. Block is of age, there will be some interest due upon the twenty thousand pounds,” said Mrs. O’Rouke ; “ if the day is still to come, her husband will be obliged to get a part of the principal discounted to *serve* him in his present necessities ;—pray your Ladyship, who is it your daughter is to look up to for the payment of her fortunes, for I promised to carry her back word about it ?”

“ Damn her fortune,” exclaimed Sir Benjamin, turning up the room.

These words were a sufficient explanation to Mrs. O’Rouke. “ Oh it is yourself, is it, that is answerable for the property ?” she said. “ Aye, Mrs. Dimick is your wife, and it is all right and natural that it should be so ; Mrs. Block and myself might have known as much if we had taken a minute’s reflection.”

Lady Buckhurst spoke next. "What a sad thing it is," she exclaimed, "that Mr. Leuwitzer should happen to be out of the kingdom just now;—what would I give that I had him here to consult him upon what is best to be done in this perplexing business."

"What is best to be done," echoed the Knight, "why, if Amica is not your daughter, turn her out of the house;—what should be done with an impostor?"

"But how am I to prove whether she is my daughter or not?" returned her Ladyship, "that is the difficulty; and if even I find at last that she is not my child, I have now so long been accustomed to think of her as if she were, that I shall feel a good deal on her account as well as my own."

Owing to the interest of the subject they had been discussing, the time had slipped imperceptibly away, and the butler now entered the drawing room, inquiring of her Ladyship, "Whether the dinner might be put upon the table?"

"Bless me!" cried Lady Buckhurst, "is it dinner time?—I'm sure I can't eat a morsel."

“How should you eat while you are so flustered?” exclaimed Mrs. O’Rourke, “Let it be put back awhile till you send for your own daughter home to you, and you’ll eat comfortably enough when she comes to sit down at the same table.”

Her Ladyship’s soul recoiled at the idea of Mrs. Flap, the milliner, the ——— sitting down at the same table with her, as her acknowledged daughter; but if her daughter she really were, what alternative had she? Sir Benjamin felt equally reluctant to behold her one of his table guests; it was true that he had more than once paid visits to her, and her nominal mother; but gentlemen often pay visits which they would not on any account wish the parties thus honoured to return.

A long pause ensued——Lady Buckhurst suddenly broke it by exclaiming, “I have a thought just come into my head; to be sure it is but a thought, but it is possible that it may help us out of this difficulty.”—She rose from her chair.—“I shan’t be gone long,” she said, as she moved towards the door; and as she left the apartment, she added, “How all this will hurry and flurry

that poor girl Amica, but since it must be, it must be."—She immediately proceeded to Amica's chamber, whom she found dressing for dinner ;—Amica perceived on the countenance of Lady Buckhurst the expression of an agitation of mind far different to the ire which had animated her features when she had left her in the breakfast apartment ; and her surprise was excited by her Ladyship exclaiming, " Shew me the top of your arm, Amica, pray let me see the top part of your arm."

As Amica was in the act of changing her gown, her Ladyship followed her words by instantly making an investigation of her left arm ; the countenance of Lady Buckhurst fell as she examined it; she moved hastily round to the other side of Amica, and having examined her right arm with the same earnestness and attention which she had done her left, in scarcely intelligible accents she said, " Then you are not my child, indeed ; you have never been inoculated, and my Amy was inoculated when she was eighteen months old : Lord have mercy upon me, I feel sick and ill, and almost fit to die !"

The words of Lady Buckhurst struck the heart of Amica like an electrical shock ; a faint giddiness seized her, and catching hold of the back of the chair into which Lady Buckhurst had sunk for support, she exclaimed, " Not your child, Madam ! Oh tell me whose daughter am I then ! "

" That's more than I know," replied her Ladyship, " but who do you think *my* daughter is ? Why that creature ; Heaven forgive me for calling my own child a creature — Why, she that was Mrs. Flap ; — don't you pity me ? yes, I'm sure you must pity me. "

It was with the greatest difficulty that Lady Buckhurst could keep off a fainting fit. — Lenox entered the apartment, and brought a glass of water to her relief ; and some minutes after she had swallowed it, she began to give the astonished, and tongue-tied Amica, something like an account of the dreadful explanation which had that morning taken place between herself and Mrs. O'Rouke.

In the mean while Sir Benjamin had ascended brimful of the strange intelligence to the chamber of his son ; — and Mrs. O'Rouke



more able to do any thing than to remain silent, repeated her story to the butler, whom accident had led to her into the drawing room, and whom she detained as the auditor of the wonders she was eager to relate.

Scarcely, therefore, was Amica become acquainted with the sudden change which had taken place in her circumstances, ere the house rang with the incredible intelligence of Mrs. Flap the milliner having turned out to be Lady Buckhurst's daughter.

Although Colonel Buckhurst had out of consideration to the aggrandizement of his family, given up the idea of making Amica his wife, still his admiration of her person was not less strong than it had been at the moment he had desired to become her husband; and no sooner did he gather from the lips of his father, the apparent proof of her not being the lost daughter of Lady Buckhurst, than his fertile imagination immediately filled him with hopes that from this discovery might proceed a possibility of his still enjoying the possession of her charms, and he instantly represented to

Benjamin, that unless Amica could produce any stronger proof of her being Lady Buckhurst's child, than Mrs. O'Rouke had advanced to the contrary, it became him instantly to dismiss her from his house; as it was impossible to say whether by suffering her to remain in it longer he might not be giving his protection to the child of beggary and disgrace.

Ever ruled by the opinions of his son, Sir Benjamin instantly rushed out into the gallery, and called loudly about him, inquiring where Lady Buckhurst was to be found? He was informed that she was in Amica's chamber; and he accordingly proceeded thither to her.

The disrespect which our knight considered Amica to have shewn to his son in her refusal of his hand; and also the want of regard which she had testified for his own interest, by refusing to ally herself with Sir Jasper Wormeaten, an alliance which she knew him so earnestly to desire; had raised in his heart against her, a degree of resentment which he did not feel by any means displeased at being furnished with an opportunity for displaying; and entering her

chamber with the step of authority, and the wrinkled brow of pride and passion, he said, "Well, my Lady, have you been able to get any insight into the truth of this business from *that*."——

What epithet he would have bestowed on Amica, to whom the emphatic *that* referred, is uncertain, for Lady Buckhurst interrupted him by saying, "Oh yes, yes; whoever is my daughter, Amica is not; for she has never been inoculated, and my Amy"—

"Oh, she is not?" cried Sir Benjamin, in his turn interrupting her; "then Madam," turning to Amica, "you are an impostor; but I shall settle the business with Mr. Leu-witzer, as it may be possible he did not let you see as far into the mill-stone as he was able to look himself,—so I give you two hours to pack up before you start; and if you choose a mouthful of victuals before you go, you have my leave to go down into the kitchen and ask for it."

"No, not to-night, don't send her away to-night," cried Lady Buckhurst, "consider in two hours more it will be quite dark."

"She's a dark character herself," rejoined Sir Benjamin, "so she can't quarrel with the dark;—and go she shall."

During these sentences Amica had frequently attempted to speak, but they had been uttered with so great vehemence and volubility, that she had not been able to make herself heard, at length she said, "Fear not my stay, Sir; as I am no longer the daughter of Lady Buckhurst, worlds should not bribe me to be one unnecessary moment dependent on the generosity of Sir Benjamin."

"Zounds! what a spirit for a girl that has just been reduced to such an humiliation!" exclaimed the knight; "however, Madam, let me advise you to behave with civility, lest I should think proper to arrest you for the expences of your maintenance since you have lived in this house, with which I now intend to charge your friend Mr. Leuwitzer," and with these words he bounced out of the room.

Gentle as was the soul of Amica, her spirit was too proud to reply to such gross and unmerited indignities; and she addressed Lenox, requesting her to assist her in mak-

ing a bundle of a few articles which were necessary to her immediate use.

Lady Buckhurst comprehended the feelings of both Amica and her husband; and wretched as she felt herself, she still gave some portion of her thoughts to the unfortunate girl whom the day before she had considered as her child.—“Why where will you go?” she said, seeing her employed in preparing for her departure. “Shall I beg of Sir Benjamin to let you stay here one night longer?”

“Pardon me, Madam,” replied Amica, “but after the insulting manner in which Sir Benjamin this morning at breakfast spoke of my first protector, Mr. Leuwitzer, I should think myself unworthy of enjoying his future affection, were I to accept such a favour, if even it were offered to my acceptance, from the man who aspersed his unsullied character, now the bond which once constrained me to remain a member of his family has ceased to exist.—Whilst I believed you my mother, I felt an obligation to endure, for your sake, many disagreeable points in the conduct of Sir Benjamin and his son, which I suffered to wound my

feelings in silence ;—that obligation is now at an end.”——

“ Ah, you don’t care for me, I see you don’t,” cried Lady Buckhurst, interrupting her. “ I believe you loved me till I asked you to marry Sir Jasper ; I meant it all for your good, indeed I did ;—don’t part from me in anger, pray don’t, for indeed I fear I can’t love her that I am called upon to acknowledge as my daughter half so well as”——Her Ladyship began to sob and weep, and her tears choked her utterance.

“ I wish you happy, indeed I do, Madam,” said Amica, taking her hand, and giving it a friendly pressure ; “ I am performing an act of justice in ceding my place in your affections to your real child ; and I hope she will repay you by her future conduct for your present anxiety.”

“ Oh dear, I fear not ! I fear not ;” replied her Ladyship, “ but where will you go ?”

“ Although Mr. Leuwitzer is not in England ; I shall meet with a kind reception at his house in Richmond, from his old

house-keeper, Mrs. Sarah, I am certain," returned Amica.

"Do you think so?" rejoined Lady Buckhurst; "I am glad to hear that, very glad. —Have you any money? take these three seven shilling pieces, pray do."

Amica replied that she had sufficient money to defray her expences to Richmond, and infinitely more than sufficient for that purpose; —as her Ladyship was on the point of speaking again, the voice of Sir Benjamin was heard in a tone of fierceness, calling to her to come down. "I must go," she said, "all this work has made him so cross, I tremble to think what will be the end of it. —God bless you, and if the three seven-shilling" —

Sir Benjamin called again more loudly and angrily than before, and she was obliged to hurry down stairs.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The conduct of a Divine proved not to be  
Divine conduct.*

THE economy with which Lady Buckhurst conducted her establishment in all matters where it was possible to economise without injury to the appearance she wished to preserve in the eye of the world, had caused her to keep only one waiting-woman, who acted as the joint servant of her daughter and herself;—Amica's bundle being packed, she put into the hand of Lenox a couple of guineas as a remuneration for the services she had received at her hands in the course of the winter, and desired her to request any one of the male servants who could at that time be best spared, to procure her a coach, and see her in safety to the Richmond stage.

Had not Amica by her regularly affable conduct rendered herself a favourite with the



domestics of the family, this present was sufficient to make Lenox at least her friend. —“Thank you, Madam,” said Lenox, as she pocketed the gold, “and send you happy wherever you go ;—whoever your mother is, I am no christian, if she ain’t a real and true lady ; one may judge of her gentility by your kind and genteel manners ;—and I, and many of us below, have always said we thought you too good a great deal to be the daughter of such an old nip as my lady,—but she’ll be finely mistaken if she thinks I’ll wait on such a *creter* as Mrs. Flap, let her be whose daughter she may.—As true as you are alive Miss, she was one of the most *immodestest* women in all London when she kept the milliner’s shop in Bond-street ; and what’s more, her *carricter* is so well known, that it is no scandal to speak one’s opinion of her.”

“I hope she will reform now then,” said Amica ; “pray lose no time in carrying down my message, lest I should be too late for the stage.”

“Stage !” cried Lenox in accents of commiseration, “you have more right to a coach and four, than some folks I could name, have

to a pudding cart,) and with these words she left the room,

The few moments of solitude which succeeded filled Amica's mind with the most serious reflections. "Not the daughter of Lady Buckhurst," she considered, "whose child am I then?—Perhaps I shall descend to the grave in ignorance of my parents.—But how blest is my present orphan state in that kind protector whom I regard and love with equal veneration as it would be possible for me to do a real father!"—The agitation of her mind was so great, that she was almost incapable of analyzing her feelings, and scarcely knew whether she were grieved, or not, at being released from her supposed affinity to a woman whose principles and whose ideas were so entirely opposite to her own.—"How great a struggle," she reflected, "did it cost Mr. Leuwitz, to resign me to the protection of this supposed parent! how great a delight will he then experience at my restoration to his parental care!" A smile succeeded this idea.—Whatever gave Mr. Leuwitz pleasure, she had so long been accustomed to consider in the light of happiness to herself, that every lingering shadow of re-

luctance to quit Lady Buckhurst vanished under the impression.

At the expiration of about twenty minutes, Lenox returned with information that there was a coach at the door, and that Sam had promised to attend her into Piccadilly, "but," added Lenox, "though all my fellow servants agree with me in admiring your spirit in quitting the premises after the treatment you have met with, we can't bear you should go in the stage; do pray Miss, go your journey in a *po-shay*."

Amica thanked Lenox for the interest she expressed in her comfort, and said, "that she considered she should be much safer in a public vehicle, which contained a number of passengers like the Richmond coach, and where it was probable that she should at least meet as many civil as uncivil companions, than travelling alone in a chaise in the dark."

Followed by Lenox, who carried her bundle, she now quitted her chamber; in the gallery she was met by a tall, thin, male figure, habited in a rusty black suit, and who looked the prototype of famine and craft; with a grin, and a bow, he requested

her to honor him with five minutes conversation.

"I don't know you, Sir," was her reply ;  
"who are you?"

"Your better genius," he answered, and taking her hand he led her forcibly into a dressing room, by the open door of which she had met him, "I come to you, commissioned by Colonel Buckhurst," he continued, "who feels extremely for your unfortunate situation—He entreats you will not think of going into an empty house at Richmond, but allow me to conduct you to an elegant suite of apartments, which he hired about a month ago for himself in New Bond-street. This fifty pound bill he has given me to defray your present expences; and he desires me further to add, that as soon as he is able to leave his chamber, he will fly upon the wings of adoration to visit you; *He* will not desert you though his *family* may.—These words were accompanied by significant nods and winks, and an occasional emphasis, which could not fail to convey to the senses of Amica the designs of the Colonel, who entertained the audacious hope of reducing her mind with her circumstances; and fully convinced

her of the infamy of the pander whom he had employed for that purpose.

The Colonel had no sooner heard that in consequence of his advice Amica was about to be driven from his father's house as an impostor; than, acquainted that she had at that time no Mr. Leuwitzer to fly to for protection, and judging that in her want of an asylum to shelter her friendless head, his offers of service might, in the greatness of her difficulties be accepted as a last resource against being turned a wanderer abroad; unable himself to quit his chamber, or to write, he instantly dispatched a messenger to call into his presence Mr. Demur, to whom he delegated the business of making known to her his *friendly* inclinations. He it was who thus unexpectedly accosted our heroine, and who in the warmth of his zeal for the accomplishment of his patron's wishes, expressed himself at the first moment of his self-introduction to her, in terms too plain to suffer her to hesitate a moment upon the grossness of the insult which he had been commissioned to offer her.

"Tell your employer," replied Amica, assuming from circumstance a dignity and

courage unknown to her before, " that I have now received a decisive proof to convince me of the justice of the opinion I ever entertained of the baseness of his heart; and for yourself, be thankful that your name is not known to me, as I have friends who would esteem me guilty in suffering a monster like you to escape their punishment."

Having concluded this sentence, she darted out of the apartment, from which the efforts of the human-shaped serpent were unable to prevent her departure; and catching hold of the bannisters, she began to descend the stairs—Lenox was still at her heels, and it appeared that she had overheard the conversation which had just passed, for the moment they were both upon the stairs, she said, " I can tell you who it is, Miss; it is Mr. Demur the *'turney*, that does all the Colonel's dirty work."

" Dirty work, indeed," echoed the lips of Amica, almost without the consent of her heart; and as she proceeded, she added, " Can it be possible for me to regret quitting such a house as this?"

"No, that I am sure it can't," was answered from several voices: Amica looked up on hearing these sounds, and beheld all the servants collected in the hall to bid her farewell.

"But don't let it fret you, Ma'am," cried the house-keeper, "thank Heaven you have a good friend in the German gentleman; he is a gentleman that knows how to conduct himself like a gentleman, and that is more than you ever find upstarts able to do."

"No, no," cried the old coachman, "I once lived with a Lord, but his family had been Lords from generation to generation; and mercy upon us how differently he behaved to what your new-made titled folks do!—they have been used to nothing as it should be, and therefore they don't know what to order, or what to expect."

However true the matter contained in these sentences, they were by no means gratifying to Amica, as they displayed duplicity of heart in the utterers, who were receiving wages and maintenance from the very objects of their abuse;—she was, however unwillingly, obliged to hear what was said whilst distributing amongst them her fare-

well presents ; and having done this, she got into the coach.

On arriving at the White Horse cellar, Sam informed her that the Richmond stage was already there, and upon the point of setting out ; but that there was a vacant place in it which was at her service ; she accordingly gave her attendant his fee, and took her seat in the stage-coach :—her companions were all silent, and their silence allowed her to indulge in her reflections without interruption ; a confusion of ideas met in her brain, and amongst the number one was predominant which gave her pain ;—arguing from what had passed between Lady Dellaval and herself at their last meeting, she felt alarm lest her birth being again rendered uncertain, should cause her Ladyship to retract her promise of acting towards the happiness of herself and Maurice Stanton ; and she was acquainted with a reason why Lady Dellaval's assent to their union was of the utmost importance to them both.

On reaching the village of Mortlake the coach stopped before the public-house to deliver parcels, and one of the passengers complaining of cold, got out to take a glass of



brandy and water;—during his absence a horse was heard to plunge violently by the side of the coach, and at last to kick one of the wheels of the carriage, upon which accident an altercation took place between the rider of the animal and the coachman.

When the gentleman who had been visiting the bar of the public-house returned, his fellow passengers inquired of him, whether any damage had been done to the wheel; and whether he knew who had been the rider of the horse, as they conjectured it to have been some gentleman by the manner in which the coachman had addressed him.

To the first of these questions, he replied in the negative; to the second he answered, "That it was a gentleman well known in the neighbourhood, a clergyman at Richmond, of the name of Valmont; who was a great jockey, and who had just then been mounted upon a spirited horse which had taken alarm at a wheel-barrow of straw that stood in the road."

Amica gave an involuntary start at the sound of his name; and felt extremely thankful that she had not encountered him.

When the coach entered Richmond, she for the first time spoke, inquiring, what o'clock it was?—She was informed that it was considerably past nine—she had eaten no dinner, and although not hungry, she began to feel the want of her regular meal; she was faint and rather sick, which latter sensation she attributed to having been carried along for a length of time in an opposite direction to what she had ever been accustomed to before.

On alighting from the coach she found the night to be extremely dark, and a thick sleet to be falling; she looked around her for a conductor to the house of Mr. Leuwitzer, and perceiving a lad with a lanthorn who appeared unemployed, she offered him a shilling to carry her bundle and shew her light.

He readily accepted her terms, and a few minutes brought her to the well known house; she ran up the steps, and knocked at the door; some time elapsed, and as it was not answered, she knocked again; still no one came, and a third time she repeated her knock: in a few minutes an upper sash was

thrown up in the adjoining house, and a voice called out, "Who's that? if you want any body at that house, there's nobody at home."

"Is not Mrs. Sarah at home?" demanded Amica.

"What, Mrs. Sarah Oakes?" replied the voice; "no she's not at home, she is gone into the country to visit her relations; and the other maid is gone to a fair, and won't be back till the morning," and with this information the head of the speaker was drawn in, and the sash pulled down.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Amica, "what shall I do?" and with her hand still upon the knocker, she stood for some moments motionless and silent.

"Have you done with me, Ma'am, pray?" asked her conductor, as she did not speak or stir.

"Oh no, no," cried Amica, hastily turning round, "pray don't leave me, I know not whither to go, nor what to do;"—here she paused, for she perceived that the figure of a man upon whom fell the light of the lantern which was borne by her conductor, was

Sidney Valmont, who was standing observing her through his glass.

“*Sacre Dieu!*” cried Valmont, “can it be possible? can I believe my eyes?” and advancing towards Amica he inquired from what cause he beheld her in so strange a situation.

Circumstanced as she was, it would have been impossible for Amica to have evaded this question had she been so inclined;—Mr. Leuwitzer was out of the kingdom; it must, therefore, be evident to Sidney Valmont, that she could have no motive but necessity, for visiting his house at that hour in the evening, and attended only as she then was;—her reply accordingly was such as revealed the truth, though it did not immediately declare it. “She was,” she said, “under the absolute necessity of quitting Sir Benjamin’s house, and she had hoped —.”

Valmont interrupted her, “Under the absolute necessity of quitting the protection of your mother!” he exclaimed.

“No, not my mother; Lady Buckhurst is not my mother,” replied Amica.

Valmont’s surprise and inquiries increased, and a few subsequent sentences made him ac-

quainted with the whole truth :—" And have they been so inhuman as to drive you from them upon this discovery ? *Les barbares !*" he demanded.

No, no," answered Amica, " not exactly so ; it was my own choice immediately to quit a house where I considered myself, and did not doubt that others likewise considered me, as an intruder ;—I felt secure in meeting that asylum under the roof of my protector's dwelling, which the absence of his servants denies me."

Valmont said that he was just returned from London, and blessed his fates that his visit to the livery stables where his horses were kept, and from which he was now returning, had led him so critically to her assistance ; he begged that she would put herself immediately under his protection, and allow him to find her a lodging for the night.

Amica's heart recoiled at the idea of trusting herself to the protection of Sidney Valmont ; although he had ever treated her with personal respect, yet there was a degree of lightness, of insincerity in his character,

which rendered her unwilling to commit herself to his care.—But alone, in the open street, in a dark night, what could she do?—

“Oh that Mrs. Acton were still living in Richmond!” she cried:—Valmont had frequently heard of Mrs. Acton, and replied, “Don’t you recollect Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Acton’s most intimate friend? she now lives in the house which Mrs. Acton used to inhabit; her husband is my clerk; they let a couple of rooms as lodgings in the summer; do you think you could manage to pass one night with comfort to yourself beneath their roof? and in the morning, if Mrs. Oakes does not return to admit you into Mr. Leuwitzer’s house, I will conduct you to the protection of Mrs. Acton.”

“Is it not possible that I should go this very night to Mrs. Acton’s?” asked Amica.

Valmont replied, “That it undoubtedly was possible, but that it would be attended with great difficulty, for that to his certain knowledge the Richmond chaises were all out;—that it would be very late before they returned home, and that the morning would be advancing before the returned horses

could be sufficiently rested to set out again ; but that if she wished it, he would still give directions to have the first which came home reserved for her, and would accompany her to London let the hour be what it might."

Upon a moment's reflection, Amica preferred the idea of sleeping at Mrs. Powell's to travelling a dozen miles either with Sidney Valmont, or alone, in the dead of the night ; she perfectly remembered Mrs. Powell ; at the time of her living in Richmond, her husband had been a shoe-maker of respectability ; and she consented to go to her house, directing her attendant with his lanthorn not to leave her till she had reached it, and promising him an additional reward for his trouble.

Less than five minutes brought them to the house, and the opening of the door discovered Mrs. Powell and her husband at supper ; they directly recognised Amica ; and the respect in which Mr. Leuwitzer was held in the place, added to the relative situation as clerk in which Mr. Powell stood to Valmont, rendered the good couple extremely alert in bestirring themselves for the accommodation of their unexpected lodger.

Mrs. Powell desired her to sit down by their fire till she had lighted her one in the parlour ; and Valmont placed her a chair ; Amica received it with thanks, and returning him her acknowledgement for the service he had been of to her, requested that she might not any longer detain him ; she said, she doubted not but she should pass her night very comfortably where she was, and that in the morning if Mrs. Oakes did not return, she should procure a chaise and go to Mrs. Acton's.

Valmont promised to make every inquiry for her concerning Mr. Leuwitzer's house-keeper, and if he found that her return was not immediately to be expected, to escort her himself to the protectress under whose care she wished to place herself.

His conduct towards her had on this evening been so extremely respectful, and even kind, so unlike what she had supposed Valmont capable of, that she felt a reluctance to confess that she had rather proceed to London in the morning without him ; and, therefore, resolving to trust the event to any chance that might then arise in favour of her inclination, she suffered him to depart without ac-



cepting, or declining his offer of future service.

Amica felt herself oppressed by cold, by fatigue, and by a want of nourishment, and requested her hostess to make her some tea; Mrs. Powell was all attention and respect; and assuring Amica that her best bed was well aired, for that it had been slept in two nights before by her husband's brother, she made her some excellent tea, with which she procured her a ham sandwich, and then attended her to her chamber.

Sleep for some time refused to visit her; the wanderings of her agitated mind drove off its approaches;—how differently was she this night lodged to what she had been on the preceding one; but how blest was she in the possession of such a friend, a more than father, as Mr. Leuwitzer; his image was the pleasing vision on which her imagination principally rested; a considerable portion of it however was given to Maurice Stanton.—Lady Dellaval also entered her mind; and she felt not a little gratitude to Sidney Valmont for his kindness that evening; his exertions in her cause had undoubtedly not been very great individually

considered, but according to the opinion which she had ever entertained of him, they had been great indeed ; at length sleep closed her eyes, and while we leave her to the enjoyment of her repose, we have a few words to say of Sidney Valmont.

Besides the borough of Pliable, the Worm-eaten family had in their gift a church living of nearly three hundred a year.—In a party in the neighbourhood of Richmond, where Sidney Valmont was supping a couple of evenings before his rencontre with Amica, he had heard that the present incumbent of this living, who was an extremely old man, was very ill, and supposed to be at the point of death.

This information gladdened the heart of Sidney ; he believed that through his intimacy with Lady Dellaval, he should stand a very excellent chance of Sir Jasper's presentation, provided he presented himself in time as a petitioner for the situation ; and accordingly resolving not to lose an hour in preferring his suit, he galloped off on the following morning, immediately after breakfast, to London.—Just as he reached Portman Square he saw a post chariot and four drive

away from the door of Lady Dellaval's house, and when he knocked and enquired whom it contained, he was not a little surprised to find, that Lady Dellaval herself was going out of town in it for some time; and not a little disappointed at losing in her his mediatrix with her father.

However we have already seen that although of noble Welch blood, Valmont's circumstances were such as to render it convenient to him to lose nothing for want of asking, and to this end he obtained an interview with the Baronet.

Sir Jasper supported the true character of a great man who has a favour at his disposal, by talking a great deal, though he said nothing, and raising those hopes which he had not the least intention of realizing.

Valmont had all his life moved in circles where he had seen flattery a most efficacious weapon in the hands of those who had a desired point to carry, and he wielded it as he believed in a most skilful manner over the senses of the Baronet.—He praised his taste, his dress, his dancing, and lastly, (for Lady Buckhurst had taken care to publish the Ba-

ronet's predilection for her supposed daughter) he extolled Amica, as the most fascinating female whom he had ever beheld ; but studiously avoided a word which might inform Sir Jasper that he was acquainted with his passion for her ; judging that such a discovery on the part of the old beau, might render him suspicious of all the adulative declarations to which he had for the space of three hours been alternatively pledging his soul and his honor.

Touch but the chord which vibrates to the heart, and flattery is delicious to the ears of even those who have some idea that it is flattery they are listening to ; that is, if their minds be not of that strong nature of which the world is well off, if it can boast that one out of every hundred of the human beings which it contains, is possessed.———The sound of Amica's name coupled with every enchanting grace, and every bewitching desire, poured milk and honey through the veins of Sir Jasper, and as he listened, he began to approve her approver, and to confess his flame ; and before Valmont and he parted, he promised with some degree of

sincerity, to give him the preference to several other petitioners for the living whom he named to him; but leaving it doubtful whether there might not be somebody else whom he might still place before him.

On leaving the Baronet, Valmont proceeded to Tattersall's for his profession of divinity did not prevent his dealing in horse-flesh also; here he purchased a hunter, and was trotting home upon his bargain at the time he overtook the Richmond stage:—Having safely lodged his new purchase in a livery stable at Richmond, and seen him served with a hot mesh, for many a man will attend upon his horse at supper who would not trouble himself to throw a crust to an hungry child; he was returning to his own lodgings, when he discovered Amica upon the steps before Mr. Leuwitzer's house.

Impelled, equally by curiosity to learn what could be the cause of his beholding her in so strange a situation; and by a sense of that protection which is due to every female in circumstances of distress; he offered

himself as her protector to Mrs. Powell's. But no sooner was he acquainted with her present friendless state, than he was struck with the execrable idea of rendering her circumstances subservient to his own interest.

He considered, that Sir Jasper had in all probability, only entertained the idea of marrying Amica, because, being too violently in love with her person, not to use every means for obtaining possession of it, he had had recourse to the only method by which he could expect to make the daughter of Lady Buckhurst his.—He considered that a man of Sir Jasper's character would doubtless be better pleased to possess her on any terms than those of marriage; and he passed the night in reflecting whether there were no means by which he might render himself instrumental in accomplishing this end for the Baronet; and make a demand of the living in return for his services.—He applauded his own idea; but he perceived that it required infinite finesse to bring it to bear; because he saw it very essential to his own character and safety, if he undertook it at all, to conduct it in such a manner as to

shield himself from appearing to have had any concern in its perpetration. He feared the laws of his country; and he feared still more falling under the just resentment of Mr. Leuwitzer; for however the libertine may deride the sedate principles of the man of undeviating worth, he still feels the awe with which steady virtue never fails to strike the mind of vice, although he may refuse openly to acknowledge such an impression to be made upon his.

“And is this a clergyman!” methinks I hear some of my readers exclaim, who living ~~themselves~~ in honest purity of heart, believe other Human Beings to be what they appear, and to act consistently with their professions;—“Does our author draw an infamous trait of this nature in the character of a clergyman, and still profess to represent men as they are?” “Yes indeed, gentle reader, he is bold enough to do so, and to believe that his portrait does not at all overstep the *modesty* of nature; that is the nature of the times; for a very little observation upon the busy actors on the stage of life, has taught him that an observ-

ance of the duties of religion is no more to be expected from a man because he has assumed clerical orders, than sound wisdom from the various sects of new philosophers. Those days of excellence are past (which if we do not believe to have existed, we give the lie to those good old folks who are diffuse in expatiating on the degeneracy of the present age) when men were selected for their professions according to their abilities, and acted strenuously up to their voluntary undertakings; now the scarlet coat, the gold headed cane, the long robe, and the cassock are all assumed, not with regard to the public utility, but to private advantage.—All do you say?" again calls out my honest reader. "Yes all" replies the bold author, but do not misunderstand his adoption of the word; when he says that all these professions are assumed at times by human beings who have no regard to ensuring their credit by their own private conduct as members of them; he is far from intending to convey an idea that there are not still *many* professors of *them all*, whos steady and brilliant principles add lustre to the cause in which they are em-



barked ; and thanks Heaven that there *are* those whose perseverance in the strait path of virtue, acts as a check upon the deviations of those who err wantonly into the bye paths of vice.

## CHAPTER V.

*The Lodging House.*

IN the morning a deep snow covered the ground ; Amica awoke at an early hour, and as soon as it was light, she heard her host and hostess stirring. It still snowed heavily, and the fall during the night had been so considerable, that Mr. Powell's first employment was to clear it away from before the door of his house in order to make a passage into the street.

Mrs. Powell entered Amica's chamber, and telling her that she knew her to be awake by having heard her cough, begged her not to think of getting up, till she had prepared her a comfortable fire to come to in the parlour, for that it was a *perishing* morning, and that she would be starved to death in her cold house, if she left her bed before there was a good fire ready to receive her.

Amica complied with the request of her hostess, and when Mrs. Powell at length

called her to breakfast, she requested her to ask her husband to go to the house adjoining to Mr. Leuwitzer's, and make inquiry of its inhabitants, when Mrs. Sarah Oakes was expected to return;—If her arrival in the course of a day or two were certain, she entertained some idea of rather awaiting her coming where she was, than proceeding to take up her abode in the lodging-house of Mrs. Acton, as she considered that in the quiet dwelling of Mr. and Mrs. Powell, she should be more free from observation and interruption than she could be in a house of that public nature in the metropolis, even under the protection of Mrs. Acton.

In the course of half an hour Mr. Powell returned with information that Mrs. Oakes was gone into Somersetshire, and not expected home yet in ten days; and that the snow would effectually prevent the return of the maid servant, as she was to have walked home from her brother's, about seven miles off.

Amica had no alternative; she accordingly requested Mr. Powell once more to be her messenger, and to go to an inn and order her a post chaise to convey her to London; it was already nearly eleven o'clock, and

she therefore desired him to beg that it might arrive as soon as possible.

Mr. Powell's embassy was fruitless; he learnt that every post horse kept in the town was out, except one pair, and these were already bespoken.—Scarcely had he delivered this intelligence to Amica, ere Sidney Valmont entered the house, and having overheard Mr. Powell's words as he ascended the stairs, his first address to Amica was to inform her that the single pair of horses which were at home, had been reserved by his order, for her use.

Amica offered him her thanks, and begged he would add to the obligations under which she already lay to him, by dispatching a message to order the chaise immediately to the door.

When it arrived, Valmont declared himself resolute in accompanying her: she besought him not to give himself any further trouble on her account, but he would not be shaken from his purpose, and followed her into the chaise.

Previously to his entering it he had inquired of Mrs. Powell where Mrs. Acton resided, and she had given him the best instructions

she was able for finding her abode; she had never herself been at Mrs. Acton's house, but she knew that her brother's name, to whom the hotel belonged, was Langford, and that the house was called by his name; she knew also that it was situated in one of the streets branching off from the Strand, and believed it to be Cecil-street, or Craven-street, but could not exactly tell which:—Whilst Amica was tying together her bundle, Sidney Valmont had run out to give his directions to the post boy, and on his return had told her, that the lad was well acquainted with Langford's hotel, which information gave her great pleasure.

Owing to the great quantity of snow which had fallen, their progress with a single pair of horses was very slow, and when they reached Piccadilly, it was already growing dusk; the track however was more beaten in the streets than it had been upon the road, and they proceeded along more swiftly; "We are now driving into the Strand," said Valmont, when they had quitted the Haymarket, "*Voyez*, there is king Charles," pointing to the equestrian statue as he spoke.

Presently the carriage took a turn to the left, "In this street I fancy is the hotel," said Valmont.

"Surely not," replied Amica, "I saw Catherine street at the corner of it."

"You know Mrs. Powell was not quite certain about the name of the street," returned Valmont. "I dare say it is Catherine street; you know she said, either Cecil or Craven street, and they all begin with a C."

They now stopped before a house over the door of which the word HOTEL caught the eye of Amica, and she said, "Yes, I suppose it must be so."

Valmont said he would go in, and inquire; he let himself out of the chaise, and ran into the house; in a few minutes he returned; "Yes," he cried, "it is all right; your friend is just stepped out, but is expected home in a very few minutes—let me hand you out."

Amica complied, and lighted by a waiter, he led her into a room genteely furnished on the first floor.—After about a couple of minutes stay, he told her he was

happy to see her under the roof of a friend; that if it was in his power at any future time to be of the least accommodation to her, she would give him pleasure by commanding his services; and having said this, he took his leave.

For about a quarter of an hour Amica wandered about the apartment; at the expiration of that time, as Mrs. Acton did not make her appearance, judging that the waiters in the hurry of business might have forgotten to inform her that there was any body waiting for her return, she rang the bell to inquire.

Almost immediately a waiter appeared. "Is Mrs. Acton come back?" Amica would have said, but before she could utter the second word of her sentence, he interrupted her by replying, "Not come yet, Ma'am; let you know the very instant;" and precipitately retired again.

Full another quarter of an hour passed away, and again beginning to suppose that her not seeing Mrs. Acton was caused by some omission on the part of the servants, she stepped on the outside of the door

in order to listen whether she could catch the sound of her voice;—she heard no sounds but what proceeded from the street; and on looking around her, she perceived that she was in a kind of inclosed gallery, which was lighted by a lamp depending from the ceiling;—the only door which she could discover, was one which from its situation she judged to shut out the stairs up which she had ascended.

She endeavoured to open it, but was unable to effect her purpose; the door she discovered was either locked, or there was some art in moving the spring with which she was unacquainted.

After lingering in this passage a few minutes, she returned into the sitting room, and was a second time upon the point of applying her hand to the bell string, when she heard the door which she had not been able to open, move back upon its hinges, and the next moment the same waiter whom she had before seen, made his appearance, "Now coming up, Ma'am," he said, and again retired.



Amica moved forward to receive, as she expected, her old friend Mrs. Acton, but to her inconceivable astonishment, was met at the door of the apartment by—Sir Jasper Wormeaten!

## CHAPTER VI.

*A Stranger Introduced.*

**W**E now return for a while to our friends Mr. Leuwitzer and Maurice Stanton; a prosperous voyage, although by no means a speedy one, brought them at the end of five days to Cuxhaven; and after a night of repose, for the time of their landing was late in the evening, they proceeded to Hamburg.

Every breast of feeling is capable of drawing for itself the portrait of the widowed mother weeping over her fatherless children, and lamenting the untimely death of a beloved husband; such did Mr. Leuwitzer find his sister Adelaide: when he entered her presence she fell upon his neck, and for a considerable time they both continued unable to address each other—at length Mrs. Wei-

mar exclaimed, "Excellent brother! how kind is it in you thus to have flown to my support and relief!"

Mr. Leuwitzer was no friend to that stoicism under the privation of our nearest friends, or dearest relatives, which is by some Human Beings termed philosophy; but which he could not forbear considering as a sentiment more closely allied to want of feeling; and joined with his sister in lamenting the death of him who had so suddenly been snatched from them.

When their minds had gained some degree of composure, he informed her of his intention of carrying back herself and her children with him to England, and receiving them into his own family; intelligence which Adelaide heard with no less gratitude than joy, for the country which had given birth to her mother, was the one which she preferred; and it was perhaps the only idea which could at that time have communicated a pleasurable sensation to her heart, to reflect that her children would be reared upon her favourite soil.

From this subject Mr. Leuwitzer proceeded to inquire how the arrangements had

been made for the funeral of the deceased. "You must have been inadequate to the undertaking yourself, my dear Adelaide," said he, "but I suppose you have had the assistance of some friend."

"Of a most worthy, a most valued friend," she replied. "One who has most tenderly supplied to me the place of a brother, since the unhappy"——the remainder of her sentence was lost in her tears.

"Who is the excellent man," asked Mr. Leuwitzer, "who deserves my gratitude for the attentions which he has shewn to you?"

"He is," returned Mrs. Weimar, "a native of my best beloved country, an Englishman, his name is Forrester; we became acquainted with him at the New Spa, where we passed a few weeks last Spring; and where it so chanced, that he lodged in the same house with us."

Mrs. Weimar proceeded to say that her husband had been extremely pleased with the acquaintance which he had formed with the English stranger, and learning from him that he intended to pass the ensuing winter

in the city of Hamburg, had given him a very warm invitation to spend as much of his time as was agreeable to him at his house—Mr. Forrester had arrived in Hamburg in the month of September, and hired apartments in the same street where they lived, a circumstance which had considerably favoured their intimacy;—Mr. Weimar had shewn him many civilities, and he had repaid them by his friendly attentions to herself since his death.

She had scarcely concluded her account before Mr. Forrester was announced;—when he entered the apartment, Mr. Leuwitzer perceived in him a tall man of elegant manners, and a handsome person, who appeared about forty-eight or fifty years of age; he wore his own hair, through which a small quantity of powder had been combed; and he was dressed entirely in black.

An introduction immediately took place, and in the conversation which ensued, Mr. Leuwitzer discovered his new acquaintance to be not only a man of a sound understanding, and an enlightened mind, but one whose every word and action were those of the accomplished gentleman: our benevolent

German, who ever considered tenderness of heart as one of the most meritorious of human qualities, and whose opinion it likewise was, that whosoever was deserving of praise from the good, was treated by them with unjustifiable coldness if he did not receive their open commendations, expressed with all the warmth of unaffected gratitude to Mr. Forrester, the sense of the obligation with which he felt himself impressed by his friendly conduct to his sister.

Mr. Forrester replied, " Although, Sir, I have now the pleasure of beholding you for the first time, I have long since been acquainted with your character from the lips of the amiable Mrs. Weimar; and I do not blush to confess that I experience a gratification in having performed any action which merits the approbation of Mr. Leuwitzer."

Every arrangement for the funeral of Mr. Weimar had been made by Mr. Forrester, who had thus relieved his widow from experiencing those soul-harrowing sensations which must have arisen from her having been compelled to attend in person to so afflicting a business; accordingly on the succeeding day the interment, which had been delayed

till the arrival of Mr. Leuwitzer, that he might attend it in the character of chief mourner, as brother in law to the deceased, took place; Maurice Stanton and Mr. Forrester likewise followed the corpse to the grave; and when this day of solemnity was past, Mr. Leuwitzer began his researches after some confidential person capable of conducting the concerns of his commercial house.

As Mr. Leuwitzer and Mr. Forrester gained a farther knowledge of each other, the latter attached himself as strongly to our good German, as he had before been to his sister and her deceased husband; and Mr. Leuwitzer discovered a dejection of spirits in his new friend, which at their first introduction to each other, he had supposed to be caused only by the temporary gloom thrown over the family in which he was taking upon himself the part of an active friend; but which he soon found to be habitual.

One evening when they happened to be left alone, the conversation led Mr. Forrester to remark, that he had now been twelve years upon the continent without having

once visited England in the course of that time."

"Do you then so infinitely prefer every other country to your native land?" asked Mr. Leuwitzer.

"Oh no, by no means," replied Mr. Forrester, "but there are causes existing which would withhold me from experiencing any degree of comfort, were I to reside there; and therefore I adapt my feelings to living out of it;"—which words were spoken in a melancholy tone that evidently confessed the utterer to be a sufferer from some hidden cause:—this emotion did not escape the penetrating eye of Mr. Leuwitzer, and with the generosity and feeling natural to his character, he besought Mr. Forrester to inform him whether there were any means by which it could be in his power to extricate him from those difficulties in which he had confessed himself to be involved.

Acknowledging in the most grateful manner the kindness of Mr. Leuwitzer, Mr. Forrester replied, "Judge me not too proud, Sir, to accept friendly offices at the hands of any of my fellow beings, much less from those of a man like yourself, whose character and



whose heart I venerate;—the only reason therefore why I withhold from you the tale of my misfortunes, is, because, it is not in the power of any human being to render me service, or to extricate me from the circle of affliction by which I am encompassed.”

“ But it may be in my power to offer you consolation or advice,” said Mr. Leuwitzer.

“ I am convinced,” returned Mr. Forrester, “ that you do not inquire into my history from motives of idle curiosity. I should, therefore, be very unkindly repaying a mind of feeling like yours, merely to excite its sympathy in circumstances of which it cannot alleviate the bitterness; such conduct would exhibit a selfishness of disposition for which I should dislike myself;—do not press me, into rendering myself more at variance with my own feelings than I already am;”—and evidently struggling with reflections which he wished to subdue and to divert, he took up a book from the table, and effectually gave a turn to the conversation by asking the opinion of his companion upon a certain passage to which he turned.

At the expiration of about a month, Mr. Leuwitzer having procured a person of con-

fidence with whom to entrust the temporary concerns of his mercantile house, had fixed upon a day for embarking for England with his sister and her children, when he one afternoon received a note from Mr. Forrester, requesting him to pass a few hours that evening at his apartments, as he was desirous of holding with him some private conversation.

Mr. Leuwitzer accepted the invitation, and when he entered the sitting-room of his new acquaintance, Mr. Forrester rose, and extending towards him his hand, thanked him in a most cordial manner for his visit, and when he had seated him by the fire, he proceeded to say, " Since the time when you pressed me to impart to you the causes which had driven me from my native country ; not less in gratitude for the concern which you expressed for my happiness, than from indulgence to my own feelings, which select you in preference to all other beings, when confidence is to be reposed ; I resolved that should future events ever present me with any motive for divulging the secrets of my heart, to claim the offer I had received from you of giving them your attention.—Little

did I then imagine how near that hour was in its approach—it is already come—I shall return with you to England—I have been actuated in my determination by the paper which I now hold in my hand.”

This was a London newspaper, with several of which Mr. Forrester was regularly supplied, and which as he spoke, he laid down upon the table before Mr. Leuwitzer, pointing with his finger to the following advertisement:—

“ LORD ABBERVILLE.

“ IF Lord Abberville, possessor of the  
“ Woodland manor in Herts, be still in exist-  
“ ence, and will stretch out his hand to rescue  
“ from an impending misfortune, Hamilton  
“ Byecroft and his son Edward; the former  
“ most solemnly pledges himself in return  
“ for Lord Abberville’s assistance, to make to  
“ him a disclosure of the utmost importance  
“ to his happiness.—Apply for the adver-  
“ tisers immediately to Mr. Elves, Attorney,  
“ Chancery Lane, London.”

“ And does this advertisement,” said Mr. Leuwitzer, “ occasion your return to Eng-land?”

"Yes, it does," replied Mr. Forrester;

"Is it then possible, that you are yourself Lord Abberville?" inquired Mr. Leuwitzer.

Mr. Forrester's reply was in the affirmative.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Leuwitzer, "the cause must have been a most powerful one, which could have induced a man of your rank and possessions to have renounced his country."

"It was a mighty, a grievous, an unparalleled case of woe!" answered Mr. Forrester, "but you will hear in the course of my narrative, to which I am going to request your attention, whence it arose, and by what means it gained sufficient strength to exile me from my native land.—Deem me not, generous man, now guilty of that selfishness which I once abjured, because I confide to you my history at a moment when the advice of a friend will be most essential to my future felicity; I confess that it is because we are too often incompetent judges of our own conduct, that I now lay open my case to your friendly hearing."

"I have offered myself as your friend," replied Mr. Leuwitzer, "in gratitude for the

kind offices which my sister has received at your hands ;—friend is a sacred name which I never use without meaning :—begin your explanation with a firm reliance on the interest I take in your welfare.”

“ It is impossible for me to describe to you,” rejoined Mr. Forrester, “ the variety of confused ideas with which this advertisement fills my brain ; at one moment, hopes of a flattering nature crowd into it ;—at the next, dreadful phantoms of increased misery harrow up my soul ;—but I will endeavour to compose myself, and give you a clue to the surprise with which you see me affected, by commencing my short history.”

After a pause, during which Mr. Leuwitzer reperused the advertisement contained in the newspaper, Lord Abberville, for as such we must hence forward know him, began his recital in the following words :—

“ Those events from which the most afflictive situations of life arise, are usually of a simple nature, unattended by the marvellous ; such you will find my history.

“ I am the only son of the late Lord Abberville ; at seventeen I had the misfortune to be an orphan—my guardianship devolved

upon an uncle of my mother's, who executed the trust reposed in him by my deceased parents with fidelity. In less than a year after the death of my father I was placed at Oxford; during the period of my residence at college, my life was passed much in the common routine of university students, that is, in a great deal of pleasure, and very little application to study.—I was, however, I believe rather more partial to my books than most young men of my age, situated as I was, would have been; and infinitely less puffed up by the vanities of my wealth and title, than was to be expected from a human being, basking like myself in the sunshine of fortune.

“ When I was approaching towards the completion of my twenty-first year, I was informed that it would be deemed a necessary compliment to the county in which I was going to reside, to solemnize the joyful event by giving an entertainment to the neighbouring families: I accordingly issued invitations for a ball and supper, to all families of condition within twenty miles of my estate; deputed my steward to publish to the inferior ranks of society, that a feast would be pre-

pared for them upon the lawn in the front of my mansion, where they should be plentifully regaled under tents erected for their accommodation, with slices from an ox roasted whole, and draughts from barrels of ten year old October.

“The day and night passed off with the utmost festivity and mirth.

“On the following morning, in a walk I was taking through the village, accident led me past a neat little dwelling of peculiar beauty and simplicity ; at the moment of my approaching it, I perceived a young female of a most interesting appearance, employed in distributing various little gifts to a large group of children, who were collected, with smiles on their faces, upon a grass plot before the house :—the scene was one of that interesting nature from which I had not resolution immediately to withdraw myself, and I inquired of my steward, who was by my side, what was the name of the young woman I beheld ?”

Georgina Howard, one of the worthiest as well as the handsomest of girls, Sir,” he replied. “Georgina Howard is her name ; poor thing, she is the child of misfortune.”

“How so?” I asked, “who are her parents?”

“She has but one alive,” was the answer of my steward; “her father, who is a disabled soldier, was a Lieutenant in a marching regiment in the American war; an affectionate wife was the companion of his marches; at the siege of —— he had the misfortune to have his leg taken off by a cannon ball; he was carried to his tent, and whilst his wife was administering to his relief she was shot dead at his feet:—he returned to England with his child, disabled for service, and has retired upon his half pay to this cottage.”

The interest which the appearance of Georgina had excited in my heart, was infinitely increased by the mournful sketch which had been given me of her history; and I determined to introduce myself to her and her father; and make them an offer of any services which it might be in my power to render them;—I considered however that it would be advisable to defer my visit to some future time, as my presence at this moment would in all probability only discompose the happiness of the hour, both to



Georgina, and to her juvenile friends;—I therefore passed quickly on, inquiring of my steward whether he knew on what occasion she was distributing her presents to the young villagers; he informed me that he understood it was in commemoration of her birth-day; and directed my sight to a garland of flowers which they had dressed in honour of her, and suspended between two yew trees, which were placed on either side of the entrance to a little garden in front of the house in which she dwelt.

“How great a contrast, I immediately began to reflect, was there between the solemnization of the birth-day of this daughter of innocence and myself; the son of splendor, and of pomp! and this consideration was followed by a wish to ascertain which of these two solemnizations had been productive of the greater share of happiness.—There could be no deception in the smiles of the youthful throng now surrounding Georgina; but beneath those which had covered the faces of the guests who had been assembled on the like occasion at my mansion, had doubtless lurked envy, dissatisfaction, and an infinity more of those passions

which forbid the great and fashionable to taste unalloyed pleasure.—How much more enviable a human being then was Georgina on her birth-day, than I had been on mine ! I had held forth to my guests expectations of the greatest enjoyment, which, according to the private calculations of my own heart, were probably realized in the breasts of very few of them ;—Georgina had promised very little to those whom she was entertaining, and had succeeded in making them all superlatively happy.

“ How exquisite appeared to me her simple manners and native charms, when compared with the artificial conduct and assumed graces, of such women as I had heard extolled by the votaries of fashion as the pre-eminent goddesses of its fantastic empire.

“ From that moment an interest in the fate of Georgina Howard was excited in my heart ; an interest which will only cease to exist when death snaps the chord of feeling :—but at that moment my ideas concerning her were not of a tenderer nature than that it had afforded me the highest gratification to contemplate her person ; and that I anti-

icipated with pleasure the idea of being introduced to her acquaintance.

“ On the succeeding day, I sent my steward, who I found had a slight acquaintance with Lieutenant Howard, to inform him and his daughter, that as I had discovered them to be my neighbours, it was my wish to be known to them, and that I would call upon them that morning, if they had no objection to receiving my visit.

“ A polite message was returned to my inquiry ; and at the hour of noon, I set out for the rustic dwelling of the old soldier ;— Georgina and her father bade me welcome in terms which, although intended to convey, that they considered themselves honoured by my call, were still entirely devoid of the meanness of flattery, or the confusion of low bred manners : I remained with them a considerable time, gave them a most cordial and pressing invitation to visit me ; offered them the produce of my gardens ; and in short departed from them with extreme reluctance ; so much was I pleased with the open honesty of the father’s character, and the manners of the daughter, which were retiring without

bashfulness; simple, yet expressive of an enlightened mind.

“The health of the old soldier was very indifferent; and the remainder of his amputated leg, which had been too soon exposed to the cold after the operation had taken place, very painful when he attempted to move upon it; he therefore very seldom stirred beyond the limits of his little garden; and on this account, I received only one visit from him, as he seemed to consider that he was giving me an unwarrantable trouble, in sending my carriage to convey him to my mansion: he ever expressed the greatest pleasure at receiving visits from me, and as I derived a real satisfaction from increasing my acquaintance with him, I was not by any means slow in accepting his invitations.

“I found Lieutenant Howard to be by far the pleasantest of my neighbours; his education was good, his reflections upon men and manners just and acute; his anecdotes were of the most entertaining and instructive nature; he had served abroad in three campaigns, without the means of purchasing an advancement in his profession; and was ulti-

mately obliged to retire a cripple and support himself and his child upon the slender stipend of a lieutenant's half-pay.

“As my acquaintance with his virtues and his situation grew, my tenderest feelings were awakened towards his lot; and I could have wept for the hardness of that man's heart who would not have dropped a tear at hearing the old soldier recount the events of that day, when stretched in agony upon the earth beneath his tent, he beheld the beloved mother of his child, struck by the relentless hand of death, fall a corpse at his feet!”

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Root of True Love is Friendship.*

“ABOUT six months after the commencement of my acquaintance with the Howards, Georgina was invited by a relation of her deceased mother’s, to pass a few weeks at her house in Berkshire; her father had pressed her to accept the invitation; Georgina wished to decline it; “She could not,” she said, “bear the idea of leaving him, for perhaps more than a month, alone:”—his wish however over ruled hers; he was desirous that she should gain a little more acquaintance with the world and society, than she already possessed, and therefore almost commanded her to avail herself of the present opportunity for improving her knowledge of both.

“I was present at one of their amicable controversies, and I promised that if she would consent to take the few weeks pleasure which was offered to her, that I would

be her father's very frequent visitor, and pass my evenings with him as often as lay in my power ; a promise which she received with delight, and which I religiously kept.

" Six weeks had been fixed as the period of Georgina's absence from home ; at the expiration of five of them, as I was one day in conversation with her father, I said, " You are now no doubt thinking anxiously of your daughter's return ;"—he smiled while I spoke, and maintained a few moments of silence when I had ceased ; he then replied, " Yes, S.r, yes, I do indeed, and she has given me a subject for thought, more than I am accustomed to."

" What is that ?" I asked.

" I am a man of few words," returned Howard, " I am unconscious whether or not the sentiments of my heart have been apparent to you, but I have felt myself very much flattered by the friendship which you have shewn to myself and my daughter since your residence here ; and I should consider you to add a very important favour to the list of those which we have already received from you, if you would give me your ad-

vice upon a point wherein Georgina's happiness is materially concerned."

I did not immediately reply; and he added, "She has during her absence from me, had an offer of marriage made to her:—I have been a long while from England; I am entirely unacquainted with the rising generation; and I wish to be assured that the man to whom my daughter gives her hand, is possessed both of principle and of the means of supporting her with credit and comfort:—to you, Sir, he is probably known, as I understand he studied at Oxford, much about the time that I judge you were a member of that university yourself."

"Pray what is his name?" I asked.

"Ryecroft," was the reply, "Mr. Ryecroft."

"I know but one of that name," I returned, "and he is a married man."

"This gentleman, my daughter informs me, is a widower," replied Mr. Howard, "whose wife died about ten months ago."

"Has he a boy of about three years old?" I asked.

"Yes he has," answered the old soldier.



"And is the christian name of Mr. Ryecroft, Hamilton?" I went on inquiring.

"It is," replied Mr. Howard, "and that of his little boy, Edward."

"This information confirmed to me, that it was the same Ryecroft, who had been my fellow student at the university, who was a second time become an unshackled man, and had proposed himself as the husband of Georgina:—the Lieutenant perceived that I knew him, and earnestly besought me to give him my real opinion of his character:—it was one of the most unpleasant questions that I ever had advanced to me.

"When I first became acquainted with him, which was in consequence of our being members of the same college, Ryecroft, who was nearly three years older than myself, had already kept a couple of terms; he was like myself an orphan; he was in possession of a tolerable fortune, and appearing as if he either were unacquainted with the value of money, or considered it to be capable of producing no joy to its possessor but that of scattering it out of his purse with the most wanton extravagance; the prodigality of Ryecroft was proverbial; and even by those

who were accounted the freest livers, Rye-croft was quoted as a libertine of a superior kind—playing, wine, and the society of women of corrupt morals, engaged his whole ideas, and alone gave delight to his feelings ;—craft was the pre-eminent quality of his mind ; and the combination of vicious inclinations, and cunning sense, by the assistance which they lent to each other in procuring the gratification of their possessor, had rooted out from his mind every lingering particle of morality.

“ In the course of half a year after my becoming acquainted, with him he was introduced at a public assembly, to a young girl of not more than seventeen years of age, the niece of a master of one of the colleges :—He had learnt that by an unaccountable clause in the will of an uncle who was lately dead, seven thousand pounds had been bequeathed to her, upon the strange condition of her husband being put into possession of it the moment she should become a wife ;—Urged by the joint temptation of the legacy, and the temporary notoriety, which a circumstance of the kind would occasion to the parties concerned in it, he persuaded the

ill-advised girl to elope with him :—They were pursued, but fruitlessly. Ryecroft gained a wife, and theseven thousand pounds ; but at the instigation of his wife's uncle, who proved irreconcilable to the offence of his niece, he was rusticated.

“ This sentence produced no effect upon his feelings, it merely changed his plans ; instead of pursuing the studies requisite for the profession which he had previously to this occurrence intended to embrace, he now resolved to live an independent man upon the united property of himself and his wife —He accordingly provided himself with a handsome house, a carriage, horses, servants, and every luxury ; conducting his establishment in a manner which to every mind but his own, appeared to threaten to reduce him in a very small number of years to a much worse state of dependence than that of the exercise of a profession.

“ Since Ryecroft's marriage I had only once seen him, which had been at a public ball at Oxford, to which he had brought his wife from a species of bravado towards her offended uncle :—I had repeatedly heard,

that he was as great a profligate as ever, growing hourly more addicted to play; and that his wife was a very unhappy woman:—from Mr. Howard's account it appeared, that she was now released from her earthly cares, and her motherless boy left to the guardianship of an unprincipled father.

“I paused upon the old lieutenant's question:—a man cannot be placed in a more delicate, or unpleasant situation than that of being called upon to give his advice in an affair of matrimony, when he considers one of the parties who seek to form this union, unworthy of the possession of the other.—The female is generally offended at hearing any thing to the discredit of the man who addresses her, even if it be to save her from eventual ruin;—and an unprincipled man will never forgive a third person for having spoken the truth of him:—I had however seen so many instances of Georgina's excellent sense, and worthy disposition, that I trusted *she* would be grateful to me, for any information which I might convey to her father for the regulation of her future conduct; and Ryecroft I considered as a man of such abject principles, that it was immaterial whether he

were pleased, or offended with my interposition.

"I therefore judged it my duty not to withhold such knowledge as I was possessed of, from an old man anxious for the fate of an only child, in whose felicity his soul was entirely wrapt up, but I at the same time obtained his promise not to be hastily guided in rejecting Ryecroft's offer by what I had communicated to him, but to let his decision rest in suspense till I had written to some of my acquaintance who knew him better than myself, and had obtained their answers to my inquiries; as it was by no means impossible that the progress of time might have worked a change in his character and disposition.

"Before a reply to these inquiries reached me, Georgina returned home, and in a couple of days she was followed by Ryecroft, who was come to lay his suit before her father:—The old Soldier candidly informed him of the truth; "He had," he said "engaged a friend to make such inquiries into his character, and circumstances, as must be satisfactorily answered before he could

give his consent to his becoming the husband of his daughter."

"I will make her a handsome settlement, Sir," said Ryecroft.

"A kind, and worthy protector to supply to her my place in case of my decease, is the most material benefit which I wish her to derive from matrimony; to this consideration a marriage settlement is in my estimation a secondary consideration," answered Mr. Howard.

"In reply to this declaration Ryecroft talked loudly of his unbounded affection for Georgina, and defied any existing being to produce a proof of his conduct having ever been other than that of a gentleman; or to cast a slur upon his honour.

"This assertion was by no means a satisfactory one to the worthy Lieutenant; he was well acquainted with the distinction between honour and honesty; and that the gentleman commits many actions at which the heart of the honest man would revolt.

"Ryecroft's person was good; his manners specious; he was the first man who had ever paid Georgina attentions of the nature which he had shewn her;—she was acquainted with

her father's wish of seeing her provided with a lawful protector before the hand of death should call him from fulfilling that office to her in his own person ;—Ryecroft appeared to her the man introduced to her by fate for this very purpose ; and, therefore, from a combination of circumstances, rather than a decided preference for the man, she had permitted Ryecroft to lay his proposals before her father.

“ On the part of Ryecroft, a gust of sudden passion for the person of Georgina had seized him, and unacquainted with the restraint of his inclinations, he had sought their gratification in proposing himself as her husband ; in which character he was convinced he could alone attain the completion of his desires.

“ Ryecroft had taken up his abode at the inn in the village ; on the evening of his arrival I met him near my park-gate as I was returning home with my dogs from shooting ;—he instantly crossed the road and came up to me ; I returned his salutation with politeness, but with coolness :—amidst his other qualities, I knew him to be a professed spunger ; and not being a man suffi-

ently to my liking for me to endure the idea of seeing him at my house in that character, I took this method of shewing him my intention.

“ In the course of a very few days after his arrival in Hertfordshire, I received a decisive reply to one of my letters ; it was from a man in years, a clergyman of the greatest respectability, and unblemished character, the friend of virtue and of truth, who feared not the reproaches of the libertine. “ Were I the father of a marriageable daughter,” he said, “ no inducement should tempt me to give her to a man of Mr. Ryecroft’s immoral character :”—my friend was one of those men who never wish to conceal an opinion by the promulgation of which they may serve the interests of an object worthy of their regard ; and he concluded his epistle with giving me his permission to shew what he had written to Mr. Howard, whose situation I had described to him ; and knowing him to be sheltered both by his age, and his clerical character from the resentment of Ryecroft, I did not scruple to inclose his letter to the old Lieutenant.



“ Mr. Howard was alone with his daughter when my packet reached him ; he had already communicated to her what had passed between himself and me concerning Ryecroft ; and she was therefore in some measure prepared to learn that she could not unite herself with him, with the expectation of their union being productive of happiness ; thus her feelings were not taken by surprise.—Had her inclinations towards Ryecroft been stronger than they were, her education had been of that pure nature which would not have allowed her to hesitate one moment about the rejection of a man in whose character there were points of flagrant reprehensibility ; a very short period therefore after this conviction had been conveyed to her mind, she exerted herself sufficiently to sit down under the instruction of her father, to interdict by letter the future visits and hopes of Ryecroft.

“ Ere the letter was concluded, Ryecroft himself entered the house ; Georgina heard his step, and starting up from her task, fled precipitately from the apartment. When Ryecroft entered it he perceived a gloom collected on the brow of the old soldier, which he could not forbear imagining bore

some reference to himself;—Mr. Howard was conscious that it was observed by him, and incompetent to an act of hypocrisy, he judged it to be immaterial whether the explanation came from his lips, or from the pen of Georgina; and accordingly proceeded to state to Ryecroft, what she had been employed in writing.

“No sooner did Mr. Howard cease speaking, than Ryecroft began to confirm the accusations laid to his charge, by displaying some of the shades of his character; execrating in the most prophane terms those who he protested had slandered him; he demanded of Mr. Howard in the most vehement manner, upon whose authority he dared to reject his alliance on the plea of his immorality of conduct?—Mr. Howard was not to be intimidated by the blustering of any man whom he had no cause to fear, and whom he had never wronged; and with the utmost calmness pointed to the most material paragraph in the letter which I had sent to him.

“Almost choking with rage, Ryecroft exclaimed, “If you do not, Sir, instantly in-

form me who is the author of that scandalous libel upon my character, I shall consider you, for some reason which is at present unknown to me, as the base fabricator of it."

"I am an old soldier, Sir," replied Mr. Howard, "whose courage has for fifty years past been placed beyond a doubt; I shall not therefore be provoked by your menaces to return a friend who has performed towards me a service, the injury of exposing him to the effects of your virulent passion:—you must excuse my concealing from you the name of the writer of this letter," and as he concluded his sentence, Mr. Howard was conveying the letter towards his pocket;—the rage of Ryecroft rose to an ungovernable pitch, and he attempted to snatch it from the hand of the veteran, who succeeded in wresting it from his grasp; but not till Ryecroft had caught a sight of the direction.—"Your present conduct," said the Lieutenant, "more than justifies whatever has been said to the discredit of your name; and I now, from what relates to myself alone, desire you to quit my house."—"I am satisfied," exclaimed Ryecroft, "Lord Abberville has been the

informer in this infamous business ;—he shall feel my resentment."

"The greatest libertine is sensible of the value of preserving the *appearance* of character, however careless he may be about so regulating his actions as to ensure to himself the inestimable *reality* ;—and the only mode he has of preserving that appearance, is by lessening still more the reality, than it is already sunk in the opinion of the worthy, by supporting the dazzling shadow at the hazard of becoming a murderer, or of losing his own life :—according to Ryecroft's false opinion of fame, therefore, nothing could set him above his scandalizer, in the world, but a duel ;—in this mode of revenge, he could attack no one but myself ;—he was ignorant by whom had been written the letter of which he had seen a paragraph ; and he was aware that Mr. Howard, if challenged by him, would refuse to meet him ;—to a man of his disposition it was immaterial who was his antagonist, so he did but call one man into the field for the support of his character ; to me therefore he dispatched a note, as having been a party concerned in an affair injurious

to his reputation and his happiness ; appointing me to meet him at six that evening on a spot in the village which he pointed out.

“ The words which Ryecroft had spoken on quitting Mr. Howard’s cottage, had led the old man to suspect what might be the consequence with regard to myself, and he accordingly made an effort to reach my house, where he arrived at the same moment with Ryecroft’s note :—the sentiments of a soldier with regard to the business of duelling are very different from those of a philosopher ; I cannot therefore believe that Mr. Howard spoke his, when he attempted to dissuade me from meeting my challenger ; the reason of his being importunate with me to this effect was obvious ; my implication in this affair had arisen solely from the interest which I had taken in the happiness of himself, and his daughter ; and thus in the moment of his agitation he dreaded the idea of my falling the victim of my friendship, more than he did my worldly dishonour ; and when I had in some degree cooled his feelings by the temperance of my own, and convinced him that situated as I was in life, an unconnected man, it was impossible for

me to act upon those terms which might have been pursued by one whose life, on account of his being either the husband of an affectionate wife, the father of helpless children, or the son of aged and anxious parents, was of so much importance to others, as almost to leave him no command over it himself; he vowed that nothing should prevent him from taking my place in the transaction, and meeting Rycroft himself.

“ I opposed his proposition as strenuously as he enforced it; ‘ my good friend,’ I said, ‘ if the antagonist of Rycroft is doomed to fail, I can be infinitely better spared from the stage of life than yourself, who have a helpless daughter to protect.’ ”

“ Finding me not to be moved by his arguments, he secretly went to my housekeeper, and entreated her to go instantly and bring Georgina to him; in the hope that her voice added to his own might prevail with me.

“ Whilst the worthy lieutenant was thus harrassing his mind to find the means of preventing me from suffering in his cause; he was either wholly unacquainted with the hour of my appointment with Rycroft, or judged that hour to be more

distant :—at the period at which my housekeeper left Woodland Park, on Mr. Howard's errand to his daughter, it wanted scarcely more than a quarter of six,—no sooner therefore was she gone than by another outlet I left the house, and proceeded to the spot of rendezvous: I found Ryecroft advancing towards it, attended by his servant ;—a domestic was my only companion ; Ryecroft having informed me in his note, that he should bring no second to the ground :—we came up to each other, and in very few words settled the terms of our meeting. One fire on each side was to determine the case ; we measured the ground, and Ryecroft proposed that we should both fire together ;—I informed him that I wished him to have the first fire ; with very little reluctance he accepted my offer, and we took our appointed stations.

“ Whether or not Ryecroft took his aim decidedly at my person, I am ignorant ; his fire however was without effect :—I discharged my pistol in the air, and after I had done so, turning my heel upon him

with a slight inclination of my head, I returned home.

“I was met in the hall of my mansion by Mr. Howard, who was now leaning on the arm of Georgina, with whom he was seeking me, in order that she might second the entreaties he had been making to me.—You may easily conceive the delight and satisfaction with which they received the intelligence of all cause for their apprehensions being past ; but to give you a just idea of the gratitude with which they overwhelmed me for having stood forth their friend at the hazard of my life, is impossible !—Never, never, will be effaced from my memory the moment when Georgina by an uncontrollable impulse of thankfulness for the debts of friendship which she conceived herself to owe me, snatched my hand to her lips, and whilst she imprinted on it a trembling kiss, bedewed it with the tears of her sensibility !”

The voice of Lord Abberville faltered as he pronounced these words ; he rose from his seat, and having traversed for a few moments the apartment, as if endeavouring to dispel from his mind painful reflections,



he returned to his chair, and pursued his narrative in these words :

“ From the description which I have given you of my friendship for Georgina, you will, I doubt not, have drawn within your mind the conclusion that she ultimately became my wife :—If you have formed such a surmise, my friend, it is a just one ; the unceasing tribute of gratitude which the amiable Georgina and her venerable father were constantly paying to me after my rencontre with Ryecroft, led me insensibly from the friend into the lover, and finally made me the husband of my adored Georgina.”

“ Oh what days of exquisite bliss were these, when I first breathed into the ear of Georgina the confession of my love ; and when often urged by me to a reply, the avowal of a reciprocal attachment fell in the scarcely audible accents of virgin modesty from her lips !—Oh my God ! never shall I forget the throbbing joy with which the pulses of my heart beat, when a few weeks after our marriage, she one day addressed me by saying, “ Oh my husband, how little was I acquainted with the nature of

true love, when I imagined that I entertained that passion for Ryecroft !”

“How painful is the recollection of those halcyon moments !—How sensitively does their loss, for which I am now a mourner, convince me by the sad but infallible instruction of comparison, how exquisitely they were gifted with the most supreme bliss !—never was the happiness produced by any union of a purer nature than that enjoyed by Georgina and myself ; not one selfish idea had place in our hearts ; each strove only to procure the felicity of the other—Materially also were our delights increased by observing the joyful satisfaction which now constantly beamed upon the countenance of the old soldier, our father ; upon whom, in his descent down the hill of life, shone a gleam of that sunshine which had never cheered his ascent up its acclivity. —“I am indeed happy, very happy,” he would often repeat ; “not because my daughter is become a woman of rank, but because she is the wife of a virtuous and indulgent husband ; and he must pardon me for saying, that were he a peasant with those qualities of the heart which he possesses,

I should esteem him just as much as I do now."

"At the expiration of rather more than a year after our marriage, Georgina blessed me by giving birth to a daughter, the miniature resemblance of her own loved person, to whom I gave her mother's name. The amiableness of my wife's disposition was so great, and her ideas of virtuous propriety so strong, that she was resolutely of opinion, that no nutriment could be so fully adequate to the rearing of any child, as that which nature has appointed for it in the breast of the mother; and her whole time, for the first year after its birth, was dedicated to the gratifying task of administering to its wants."

"I had for some time past considered it necessary to shew myself at court, which I had not done since my coming of age; and also to introduce my wife there; as soon therefore as our infant was weaned, and my Georgina sufficiently recovered from her fatigue of nursing to be able to derive pleasure without fatigue from her journey, we set out for London, taking with us our little girl, whom we intended to employ a surgeon

of the first eminence to inoculate before our return.

“ A ready furnished house had been engaged for us in the vicinity of one of the most fashionable squares, of which we took immediate possession upon our reaching the metropolis.—The season of the year was not that in which either of the royal birth-days are celebrated ; it was merely our intention to avail ourselves of one of the days on which their Majesties should hold a levee, for entering their august presence.

“ A day in the week succeeding that of our arrival being appointed for this purpose, we were introduced by the Earl and Countess of J——, with whom I had an acquaintance, and who were so obliging as to pay the ceremonious visit, solely for the sake of being our escort.—Consulting the becoming, rather than the extreme of fashion, Georgina had arrayed herself with the most elegant and bewitching simplicity ; it was a style of dress which gave additional grace to her form and to her features ; in my eyes she appeared more lovely than ———, but I cannot dwell upon this part of my history ; even at this dis-

tant period, the recollection of the past is too painful for memory not to turn to madness under its contemplation. — Oh powers of omnipotence, how little did I, in the full tide of my heart's joy, then imagine that day was the last on which I was fated to behold my idolized wife,—my adored Georgina !

“ At my return from court I was agreeably surprized by a visit from the friend who had furnished me with the character of Ryecroft, which had caused Mr. Howard's rejection of him.—I was that day engaged to dine with a party of gentlemen at the house of an East-India Director, and finding that my friend was to be of the number, I prevailed upon him to sit with me till the hour of appointment arrived ; and to accompany me in my carriage to our dinner.”

“ We had not spoken that morning of Ryecroft, for I had informed my friend by letter of all that had passed between us ; as the carriage was conveying us through Oxford-street, “ See there,” exclaimed my friend, pointing, as he spoke, out of one of the windows, “ there goes Ryecroft.”

"I looked out, and beheld a person whom from a peculiarity in his gait, I instantly recollected to be him; from his dress I should not have known him to be the same man.—During my acquaintance with Ryecroft, he had been remarkable for his fashionable appearance; the characteristic of his person had been that of a studied buck;—he was now not only shabby in his appearance, but his clothes appeared dirty, and hung upon him with a degree of slovenliness very contrary to his usual style of dress.

"I observed the change to my friend. "What else," he replied, "was to be expected from a man of his depraved taste, and unprincipled heart? his all, I am informed, has been sacrificed at the shrine of pleasure, or forfeited by the unsuccessful cast of dice; and he is now indebted to the mercy of his creditors for the enjoyment of his liberty."

"How fortunate an escape to my beloved Georgina, in being delivered from uniting her fate with that of such a character," was the reflection which immediately filled my mind.—We were prevented from en-

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larging upon the subject, by the entrance of a gentleman into the carriage, whom I had promised to call in my way to the Director's.

“ We had dined extremely late, it was considerably past ten o'clock when the coffee was introduced, after which I was upon the point of bidding farewell to my entertainer, and returning home, which I had promised to do as early as possible.—Oh, that I had kept my promise ! perhaps then, —————but I was overruled in my intention, and accepted a challenge to a game of chess.

“ I had seated myself with my antagonist in a remote corner of the room, in order that we might not be interrupted by the conversation of the card players, who were surrounding two other tables;—in the middle of my second game, my attention was called aside by a hasty step which I heard approaching towards me ; I raised my eye at the sound, and beheld by my side a domestic who had been several years in my service : I observed the wildest emotion overspreading his countenance ; he endeavoured to address me, but was unable to

—The apprehensions which swelled my heart, as I drew from the expression of his countenance the idea of some calamity having befallen either my beloved wife, or child, you may easily imagine ; —The company gathered round me, and an explanation was demanded from the lips of my servant.—How I survived the dreadful tidings; or what immediately succeeded the first communication of the heart-rending intelligence to my senses, I am alike ignorant of—my house was burnt to the ground;—my wife and infant had perished in the flames !!!”

The tears burst into the eyes of Lord Abberville ; he covered his face with his handkerchief, and he was for a considerable period of time unable to recover the power of speech ; when that faculty returned to him, he addressed Mr. Leuwitzer by saying, “ Having laid before you the heads of my afflicting history, I have not the resolution to dwell upon those particulars which would only excite greater agony within my heart by reviving more strongly my recollection of the past ; and would by no means tend to give you a



clearer explanation of my case; suffice it therefore to tell you, that the victim of despair, I fled from the city which had been the scene of my calamity, and retired to the solitude of my own estate; where I met as great a wretch as myself in the father of my lost angel.

“ It is fortunate for a mind overwhelmed with grief when it has any other object besides its own affliction for its thoughts to rest upon; by those attentions therefore which I felt it my duty to pay to the inconsolable Mr. Howard, I was in all probability preserved from sinking into a lethargy of melancholy madness—the anxieties which I experienced for his hapless lot kept my mind awake to outward objects, when it would else have sunk entirely into itself, and have preyed solely upon the grief with which it was filled:—the worthy Lieutenant survived his daughter little more than three years, he died heart-broken, and sunk into the grave without a groan;—from the period of that melancholy event, which has ~~empt~~ <sup>imprinted</sup> the colour of my future life, Mr. Howard had been the only person of my own rank with whom I had held the slightest communication; the only

friend whom I had admitted to a participation of my sorrows; when he therefore was no longer left me to cast the single gleam of comfort of which his society had been capable upon my path of woe, the sorrowful features of my own mansion became insupportable to me, and I left Hertfordshire:—three years were passed by me in wandering amidst the romantic scenery of Wales and of the Hebrides; there would I pass whole days of seclusion from my fellow beings, and soothed by contemplating the beauties of nature, reflect myself into fits of grief, which admitted a strange and agonizing species of comfort to my lacerated heart.

“Unable to endure the idea of returning to my own mansion, or the society with which I had been accustomed to mix; and convinced that change of scene alone had the power to relieve the torturing burden of my mind, I resolved to travel abroad; and in order to avoid the questions that might have been proposed concerning me, or that respect which might have been shewn to my rank had it been known; and which would in my depressed state of mind have proved only a source of displeasure and trouble, I

assumed the name of Forrester, and retained in my personal service only one domestic.

"It is now nearly twenty years since the occurrence of that dreadful event which snapped the stem of my earthly happiness, and which still with unceasing poignancy rivals every other idea in my brain.—With the thought of England the most distracting images are associated, and I know no event which could ever have induced me for a moment to entertain the idea of returning to it, but the advertisement which I have just submitted to your perusal; and concerning the strange tenor of which I know not what conjectures to form, and wish to derive an opinion from your steadier judgment."

"It is now nearly twenty years since you have seen this Ryecroft, or heard his name mentioned; is it not?" enquired Mr. Leuwitzer.

"Very nearly twenty years," replied Lord Abberville; "it was on the day on which"—he was unable to conclude his sentence.

"His advertisement appears a most inexplicable enigma," returned Mr. Leuwitzer.

"My opinion is considerably altered since I first sent to request your presence," rejoined

ed Lord Abberville, " I now begin to apprehend that I should do wrong in attending to a summons of this vague nature, from a man whom I despise, and whom I cannot suppose to regard me in a more favourable point of view than I do him."

" You have asked my advice," returned the good German, " I shall therefore give it with freedom, and I hope you will be induced to follow it:—go back with me to England; and however unworthy of your attention you may find the business upon which this man requires your presence; I doubt not ere three months have elapsed, you will rejoice that some cause has arisen to recall you to your native country;—that you will eventually feel happy, that there has been some motive held out to you for your return without which you would never have returned at all; and that being once arrived in England, the lapse of time which has passed since you left it, will have materially weakened the impressions which filled your heart at your departure from it; and that you will gradually return to a greater enjoyment of yourself at home, than you can

possibly reap from existence in a wandering life abroad."

"I confess," replied Lord Abberville, "that I feel myself strangely worked upon by an emotion stronger than curiosity, to learn *what* discovery it can be of importance to my happiness, which Ryecroft declares himself to have it in his power to reward me with, if I will stand forth as the defender of himself and his son.—God of Heaven! can it be that——But no, no, that *must* be impossible;—down torturing thoughts—deceitful hopes—I will not allow myself to think at all,—but go.—If England still prove as painful to me as it heretofore has done, I can but again quit it—for ever."

Mr. Leuwitzer promised him every friendly service which might induce him to continue there; and Lord Abberville in return assured him how sensible he was of his friendship and kind sentiments towards him, by declaring, that without possessing him for a companion he never should for a moment have entertained the idea of returning to scenes so replete with painful visions; not even upon the mysterious invitation of Ryecroft.

Before they parted, Mr. Leuwitzer obtained Lord Abberville's permission to inform his sister and Maurice Stanton of his Lordship's real name and rank ; as also of the heads of his unfortunate history ;—and on the following day the party destined for England set out from Hamburgh on their way to the port from whence they were to embark.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Treachery.*

**W**E must now devote the page for a while to Amica, whom we left at the interesting moment of Sir Jasper Wormeaten's so unexpectedly appearing before her in the apartment of the hotel. The astonishment and dread with which she beheld him can scarcely require to be mentioned: with trembling steps she receded from his approaches, and the only words which she was able to articulate, were a faint exclamation of his name.

He moved up to her, and catching her hands in his, in the rapturous accents of a devotee to pleasure, arrived at the imaginary height of sublunary bliss, he exclaimed, "Ten thousand thanks, most enchanting, most heavenly of women, for the happy chance which you have given me of becoming instrumental to your felicity! Regret not your separation from those horrid plebeians, who derived

their only consequence in life from their supposed alliance with an angelic girl like yourself; my purse is unlimitedly at your command, and too poor is every requital it can bestow for your enchanting invitation hither!"

Struggling to release her hands, Amica replied, "Great Heaven! what is it that you mean by invitation? By what accident has the perversity of my fate sent you hither to display your unfeeling mind, in adding this insult to the unmerited sufferings I am already exposed to? Invitation to you!—you dare not repeat that assertion."

"My dear, exquisite girl!" rejoined the Baronet, "why this coyness—why this pretended reserve? Do I merit such a return for having flown hither on the wings of adoration, to kneel and offer you my services?—Why are you here but to keep your appointment with me?"

"With you!" echoed Amica; "I came hither to meet an honest and valued friend, who I am astonished is not already with me, and"——

Sir Jasper interrupted her with a laugh of incredulity, which he accompanied by throw-



ing one of his arms familiarly round her waist; and pressing her towards him.

By an effort of strength she disengaged her person from his grasp; one of her hand she still held tightly confined in both his, by which he prevented her from flying towards the door or the bell-string. A loud shriek burst from her lips, which she followed by crying aloud upon that protectress whom she did not doubt the house she was in contained: "Mrs. Acton! Mrs. Acton!" she repeated; "for Heaven's sake appear, and defend, protect your Amica!"

"And a female friend too!" said Sir Jasper, increasing his laugh; "now I cannot be mistaken;—you would not appoint a female friend to meet you in a place of this nature!"

"This nature!" burst frantically from the lips of Amica, for a dreadful suspicion flashed across her brain:—"this nature!—Am I not in a respectable lodging-house—in Langford's hotel?"

"In honour you trifle too much," replied the Baronet. "Did not your own letter, tantalizing angel! appoint the house we are in?"

“My letter! my letter!” exclaimed Amica.  
“What would you insinuate?—My letter!  
—To whom?”

“To the happy man who clasps you in his arms!” cried Sir Jasper. A second violent shriek issued from the lips of Amica, and again she succeeded in extricating her person from his grasp: her hand he still resolutely clenched. A trembling fit of so violent a nature as to convince Sir Jasper that it could not be feigned, seized her, and she breathed forth in accents which the quivering of her lips rendered scarcely intelligible, “You have received no letter from me; you know you have not.”

“Could I else have known that I should find you in this house at this hour?” demanded the Baronet.

A long and painful gasp for respiration was the only reply made by Amica to this question; with it burst upon her mind a conviction that she was the victim of some act of deeply-planned and heinous villainy. The expression of her features was probably of a dreadful nature, for during the pause of agonizing reflection which she maintained, Sir Jasper did not speak, but stood with his eyes fixed.

on her's; a degree of surprise gradually mingling itself with the wild admiration which had before been the sole emotion portrayed on his countenance.

Amica spoke first—broken sentences alone fell from her lips. “I am betrayed,” she said. “Some enemy has——I did not write—I did not!”—With her words her tears began to flow: after a burst of hysterical agitation, she exclaimed, “In God’s name, I conjure you to tell me where I am!”

The Baronet, thrown into amazement by the very different reception which he met with from Amica from what he had expected to have been greeted with by her, was surprised into a reply, and his answer to her demand was briefly explicit of the nature of the house.

“Heaven grant me strength to fly from it!” she shrieked forth, and fled from the apartment; but as she reached the door at the head of the stairs, which had before baffled her attempt to open, she sunk senseless upon the floor.

On reviving, she found herself supported in an arm-chair, in the apartment which she had just before quitted, and Sir Jasper alone with her: he was standing by her side, and

occupied in applying salts and restoratives to her nostrils, a variety of which articles he always carried about him for his own use.

The moment the powers of sense and action returned to her, she threw herself at his feet, and with her trembling hands clasped together, and her streaming eyes fixed upon him with an expression which might have moved the heart of brutality from its most savage purpose, she exclaimed, "Oh, for the love of mercy! save and pity me: save an unprotected friendless orphan; preserve her innocence, the only blessing which fate has left her. Oh, reflect how enviable will be the sensations of your heart when stretched upon the bed of death, my preservation from ruin shall counterbalance such other crimes as you may have been guilty of, instead of adding by its enormity to their sum!—Oh reflect, and save me!"

The Baronet raised Amica from her posture of humiliation, and replaced her on the seat from which she had sunk to his feet. The ruling passion of his heart was to behold and to enjoy the loveliness of female beauty: the women to whom he had been accustomed all his life to address himself as a gallant, had ever

been forward to meet his caresses, or rendered immediately supple to his inclinations by his liberality. In Amica he found a mind of a nature entirely new to his observation; one who would derive misery from the very conduct which had given others happiness; one from whom he must purchase his own bliss at the expence of her agonies of heart; one who would meet his smiles with tears; one who would live to hate and to fly from him, instead of becoming every day more apprehensive of losing him. Did he therefore persevere in his infamous intentions with regard to Amica, he perceived that his favourite passion of giving happiness to every woman who possessed his acquaintance, would for the first time be reversed; when, by listening to her suit, he might bind her in eternal gratitude to him, and confer on her a greater degree of felicity than he had ever yet been able to bestow on any one of her sex.

“Convince me,” he said, “by your solemn asseveration, that you neither wrote this letter yourself,” drawing one as he spoke from his pocket, “nor caused any other person to write it at your instigation, and you shall find me a protector.”

Amica cast her eyes wildly over the paper, which he spread before her upon the table, and found the contents to be these :

“ If your sentiments of affection are not  
“ changed towards me because I am no  
“ longer the daughter of Lady Buckhurst,  
“ meet me this evening, between the hours of  
“ five and six, at —————’s hotel in ————  
“ street, where I shall be happy to accept  
“ such services at your hands as the affection  
“ you a short time ago professed for me may  
“ induce you to render me in my present  
“ deserted state.—The fallen and anxious  
“ *Wednesday morning.* AMICA.”

“ Oh, merciful God !” exclaimed Amica,  
“ what heart can have been sufficiently cruel  
and depraved to have exercised this treachery  
towards an unfortunate being like myself ?  
Oh, Sir Jasper ! by the mercy which I hope to  
experience from you—by the protection  
which I pray Heaven to grant me in the pur-  
sue of virtuous principles ! this is a forgery,  
and its writer entirely unknown to me.”

“ These accents cannot be deceitful,” re-  
plied Sir Jasper ; “ and it is now my turn to

become the suppliant to you for pardon; for although the error of our meeting under these unpropitious circumstances did not originate in me, I am faulty in not having more discernment into character than to have pursued an *ignus fatuus* thus fool-hardily. As I am universally reputed a libertine, you may consider that reflection cannot be expected to have any share in my character; but my libertinism is a distinct species from the passion that generally bears that name: I am not so selfish as the herd of libertines, and my inclinations are only flattered when by their indulgence I believe myself to confer a degree of happiness on an object who calls forth my admiration. Whilst I considered your inclinations to be in unison with my own, I would have made any sacrifice to secure you mine, believing that happiness would have resulted to you as well as myself, from such a perseverance on my part: but now I perceive my error, I am satisfied still to act towards your happiness, and to deserve your gratitude, instead of obtaining your love."

As Amica listened to his words her feelings took a new turn; the tears of mingled joy and relief of mind burst into her eyes, and she said,

"Do not deceive me; realize this declaration, and my unceasing prayers"——

Sir Jasper interrupted her: "All doubt shall instantly be removed, that I may deserve the reward of those prayers." He rang the bell, and went to the outward door to meet the person who should appear to reply to it. "Order me a coach instantly," he said; then, returning to Amica, he inquired, "Whither it was that she wished to be conveyed?"—— This she explained to him in the best manner she was able. He was well acquainted with Langford's hotel, and promised immediately to conduct her to it. After this promise he spoke no more, but continued walking up and down near the door of the apartment in a restless manner, which bespoke his agitation of mind: in about ten minutes the coach was announced.

"Are you afraid to trust me as your companion to Langford's hotel?" he inquired of Amica.

After his late unexampled and unexpected conduct, she considered that it would be ungenerous in her to express such a fear; she therefore replied only by a supplicating look of timidity, and a gentle inclination of her



head. She could not immediately divest herself of all fear, nor could she behold Sir Jasper in the decidedly honourable point of view in which the last instance of his conduct towards her appeared to demand that she should regard him; but she considered that former impressions, if she felt them to have weight in biassing her private opinion, could not be allowed to appear without a violation of that confidence which was now due to him, and she rose to go down stairs to the coach.

She still trembled so excessively, that on standing up, she was unable to support herself without resting upon the frame of the chair. In the most delicate manner Sir Jasper extended towards her his hand; and, with a countenance and voice immediately the reverse of what his had been half an hour before, he besought her to accept his assistance.

Her first wish was to leave the house, she therefore seized eagerly upon the means which were to assist her in departing from it; and, supporting herself upon Sir Jasper's arm, she reached the outer door. She observed him to put some money into the hand of the waiter, and he then followed her into the coach.

The Baronet placed himself upon the opposite seat to that upon which the exhausted Amica had sunk; the side-glasses were both down, and although a breath of evening air would at any other time have filled him with terror, he did not attempt to raise even one of them, probably imagining that his companion might feel averse to the idea of privacy which, their being drawn up might suggest to her.

"How long shall we be in reaching Langford's hotel?" inquired Amica.—"I hope not long."

"Not above five minutes," Sir Jasper replied.

"Thank Heaven!" returned Amica.—"I am very ill."

In a very short time the coach stopped at the door of the wished-for house: a waiter ran out, and let down the steps.

"Is this Langford's hotel?" exclaimed Amica.

The reply was in the affirmative.

Amica sprang out of the coach, and ran into the hall. "Is Mrs. Acton at home?" she cried: "pray tell her that Amica implores to see her instantly; pray tell her so directly."

Mrs. Acton, who was drinking tea in an apartment of which the door was partly open on one side of the hall in which Amica was standing, heard these words, and recognising the voice which spoke them, she ran out with an incoherent exclamation of surprise to meet the speaker.

The moment Amica perceived her, "Mrs. Acton, dear Mrs. Acton!" she exclaimed; and, rushing towards her, instantly fainted in her arms.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Gratitude.*

WHEN the powers of recollection returned to Amica, she found herself extended on a sofa by the side of an excellent fire, and her friend Mrs. Acton, and a female servant, employed in chaffing the palms of her hands, and her temples, in order to restore sensation.

Perceiving her materially recovered, Mrs. Acton ordered her servant to go down stairs, and inform the gentleman below, that she was considerably better ;—In a few moments the girl returned, “ Sir Jasper,” she said, “ had desired her to deliver his most respectful compliments to the Lady, to say that he was extremely delighted to hear of her amendment, and should wait upon her on the following morning to make personal inquiries after her health.”

“ Is he gone now then ?” asked Amica.

“ I dare say he is by this time,” replied the girl, “ for he desired the waiter to call him a coach, and there is a stand at the corner, only three doors off.”

Believing Amica now to require no attendance which she was not herself able to give her, Mrs. Acton dismissed her maid servant from the apartment ; and as soon as they were alone, she burst into a string of inquiries natural to the situation in which she beheld her young, and respected friend ;— “ Why, my dear Miss,” she exclaimed, “ what can have happened to you to bring you to my house in this agitation of mind ?—has any misfortune happened at your mother Lady Buckhurst’s ?—or have you had any bad news from Mr. Leuwitzer !—God send that may not be the case.”

“ Oh, no, no,” answered Amica, “ I know of nothing contrary to his health and happiness.”

“ Well, that is one good thing, however,” returned Mrs. Acton ; “ but what is the matter my dear Miss ? it must be something particular I know, not only by the flurry of your spirits, but by your clothes ; how

dirty they are ! you look as if you had not had a clean gown on for a week."

Amica was so well acquainted with the *cleanly* foible of Mrs. Acton's mind, that she did not regard it as a want of feeling in her to lose a thought upon her dress, at the moment herself stood so eminently in need of all her consideration, but placed it to its true cause, the prevalence of habit ; and drawing her down upon the sofa by her side, she gave her a brief but satisfactory account of all that had befallen her, since the departure of Mr. Leutwitzer from England.

In the warmth of her generous feelings Mrs. Acton inveighed, nay stormed, against the author of the infamous letter which had led Amica into the labyrinth of danger from which she had so fortunately escaped spotless :—" She and her husband," she said, " owed their all to Mr. Leuwitzer ; but for his generosity in restoring to them the five hundred pounds which Mr. Acton had been so unhappy as to lose from his pocket, they must at that period have sunk in life, perhaps never to have risen again ;—their circumstances were now considerably mended ;—

they could command five hundred pounds without interfering with the immediate necessities of their existence ; and she would go and speak to her husband directly, to have advertisements inserted in the newspapers offering that sum as a reward for any one who would discover the author of the letter ; she stood that sum indebted in equity to Mr. Leuwitzer, and it would be a glory to her to return it to him, in the shape of a service to one whom he so tenderly cherished."

Blush ye fluttering insect-inhabitants of the drawing-room, who too frequently forget in your prosperity, the hand which raised you from obscurity to your present glittering eminence ; blush, to see yourselves deficient in one of the noblest passions which animates the breast of human beings, whilst the heart of an inferior swells with the luxury of gratitude !

With tears Amica heard Mrs. Acton's generous purpose, and with difficulty she prevented her from putting it into execution. " Do not, my worthy friend," she said, " believe me ungrateful for your kindness, or unwilling to receive a service at your hands ; but indeed, the pursuance of the

plan you have proposed would prove to me the reverse of a benefit: It is not likely that the author of so infamous a plot as that from which I have this day escaped, should have trusted his secret to any accomplice; much less likely that any bribe will induce him to betray himself; and the advertisements you speak of could answer no end, but that of blazoning to the world a story, which the illiberal and prejudiced might turn to my discredit, and which, in all probability, will now never be known.

After some time Mrs. Acton perceived the force of Amica's arguments, and was overruled by them.—She then asked of her whether she had herself no suspicion who, amongst her acquaintance, could have been sufficiently ill-disposed to commit an action of that unpardonable nature; and for what purpose?

Had Colonel Buckhurst possessed any knowledge of her actions and intentions subsequently to her quitting the house of his father, she would not have been surprised to discover, that by means of his nefarious agent, Mr. Demur, he had endeavoured to revenge himself upon her for the contempt with



which she had ever treated his advances towards her heart, by planning the meeting between herself and Sir Jasper in the house from which she had just escaped ; but as she felt certain that her proceedings could not have been known to him ; as also that no person but Sidney Valmont had been acquainted with them ; on him rested her suspicions ; but she was not only entirely at a loss to conjecture on what account he should have become her decided enemy, but also to believe that a diabolical spirit adequate to the performance of an act of this heinous nature could inhabit the breast of one whom she had ever regarded as an insignificant, but a harmless being.—In the purity of her own heart, Amica did not cherish the belief of there existing human beings with whom self-interest chokes every virtuous and manly principle, and whose real nature is not known, perhaps even to themselves, till they imagine that they see an advantage to be derived from an act of infamy, and find that they have not sufficient courage to forego the flattering temptation of grasping the desired good at any price.

Mrs. Acton was, however, requested by her not to give breath to her suspicions, or to communicate to any one except her husband, the occurrences of that day; which injunctions she promised strictly to obey.

Whilst Amica was partaking of a comfortable supper which Mrs. Acton had provided for her, that good woman insisted on being her sole attendant; and her conversation was now of the strange discovery which had taken place of her not being the daughter of Lady Buckhurst; with her comments upon the want of feeling in those who had upon this discovery driven her from their house and protection.—“As for Mr. Lewwitzer, she scarcely knew how to think he would be acted upon by the intelligence;—she did not believe he would be much vexed by it;—she was of opinion that he had never thought Lady Buckhurst a mother worthy of such a daughter; and she was certain nothing could give him so much happiness, as to be allowed to consider her as his own child.”

At an early hour Amica begged to be allowed to retire to rest, Mrs. Acton conducted her to a handsome chamber, and after she had assisted her in undressing, she told

her that she hoped she would sleep well, for it was a charming soft bed, and added, " Though I live in London, I have all my linen washed in the country; and I question whether you have lain in so white a pair of sheets since you left Richmond."

Various reflections for a length of time drove off the advances of sleep from the pillow of Amica; amongst these the most prominent was that of the orphan state to which she was once again so unexpectedly reduced.—" Had she any parents in existence? and if she had, who were those parents?" were questions which her inability to reply to at the present moment, now her spirits were depressed by the involvements in which she had that day been placed, drew the tears into her eyes;—a consideration however quickly arose to calm her sorrows; " I shall never feel the loss of those parents whilst the worthy man who has been my protector through life, continues to exist:" her tears now flowed from a different emotion; and with the change which took place in her feelings, sleep stole by degrees upon her senses, and at length locked her in the repose of temporary oblivion.

## CHAPTER X.

*Deliberation.*

WHEN Sir Jasper returned home after his adventure, he placed himself before a good fire in the dining-room of his daughter's house ; and his first care was to use every precaution in his power against the ill effects of the cold which he feared that he might have taken from riding in the evening air with the glasses of the carriage down ; or which might attack him in consequence of his having remained some minutes exposed to the cold draught of the open door in the hall of Mrs. Acton's house :—For the benefit of his stomach, he accordingly swallowed a small glass of brandy and water, into which he infused a few drops of a warm tincture which was in high repute with him ; and for that of his feet, he kicked off his leather shoes, and replaced them with a pair of flannel socks, after which he extended

them upon a pillow laid on a stool before the fire.

These arrangements being made, he proceeded to inquire of his heart how he was satisfied with his own conduct in the affair just past?—The reply it made was one which gave him true pleasure. “Could you have been happy,” it demanded, “in having made a lovely girl unhappy?—and you must be happy in having rendered her so.”——“I must,” answered the Baronet; replying to the question of his heart, “and I am happy!” and he added, for we must tell *all* the truth, as the relater of the story, “How fine a fellow am I, compared with those selfish libertines who are indifferent about every one’s happiness but their own; careless even of the sufferings of the object from which their happiness is derived; and who can unfeelingly banquet on the agonies of the seduced and defenceless girl.”

Bravo, Baronet! we agree with you in your superiority, and we hope our readers do so too; you have still the feelings of a man, mixed with the passions of a rake:—Those of whom you have just spoken, are

only brutes, though courtesy suffers them to pass for human beings.

Upon the whole Sir Jasper felt extremely pleased with himself; he had, in opposition to the most violent temptation to deviate from his rule of ever so conducting himself as to confer happiness on woman, still struggled through the temptation presented to him, and adhered to his principles:—He was very much pleased with his resolution indeed! and stamping his foot, as it were in defiance of the gout, upon the floor, and clapping his hand at the same time with energy upon his knee, he believed that he did but want to know who had wronged Amica by the forgery of the letter which had that day led him into her presence, to take upon himself her further redress by challenging him.

Upon this point, however, he was not so firmly decided as upon the rectitude of his conduct in the preceding instance; and the idea was perhaps but a momentary one communicated to his imagination by the warmth of his feelings.—However, whether it was so or not, he still earnestly wished to know by whom the letter had been penned, that he might by learning the author, decide in what

manner to punish the offence; but all his conjectures to this end left him only in the greatest doubt.

Whilst he sat ruminating over some coffee, which he had ordered to be brought to him, he heard footsteps moving over his head in the drawing-room, and voices in loud conversation; he was surprised, for he believed himself to be the only inhabitant of the house except the servants, and judged that they would not either be in that apartment, or so vociferous within his hearing.

He had listened but a few moments to those sounds when the bell of the drawing-room was rung; the door opened; and some persons who left the room began to descend the stairs, still in conversation! when they had reached the ground floor, he imagined that he heard amongst the voices that of his daughter Lady Dellaval; but still judged himself mistaken, as she had on quitting London the day before, spoken of not returning to it in less than three weeks.

The door into the street was opened, some persons went out, and at the same moment the door of the apartment he was sitting in was opened likewise; he turned

round his head to behold who was entering, and perceived Lady Dellaval.

She advanced into the room, and he expressed his surprise at seeing her so soon returned.

She replied, "that accident had enabled her to conclude the business on which she had left London, much sooner than she had expected."

"And what, my dear Catherine," asked Sir Jasper, "could be the important affair that had power to draw you from the metropolis, from the zenith of fashion and pleasure, at this season of the year?—I am quite amazed to find that any existing circumstance possessed so great authority over your actions."

"You know, Sir," answered Lady Dellaval, "that our affairs are very little known to each other; very little indeed, for those of a father and a daughter; I hope the time will come, when we shall harmonize better; it would give me infinite pleasure."

"I begin to suspect," said Sir Jasper with a smile, "that you are in debt, and afraid of an arrest; nothing else I think could



make you so serious ;—if it is so, I am in a most unfavourable situation for a communication of the kind from you, for I am at this moment most wretchedly poor myself.”

Lady Dellaval smiled in turn, but it was not a smile of pleasure, or of acquiescence in her father's suspicion ; she appeared extremely agitated ; the expression of her countenance partook both of pleasure and pain ;—momentary gleams of joy appeared to warm her heart, and to become as suddenly checked, as felt, by reflections of an opposite nature.

“ Pray pour me out one cup of coffee,” she said, after a pause ; “ although I am but just returned from travelling, and feel quite knocked up, I must go out again before I can retire to bed.”

“ Why whither now ? ” asked the Baronet.

“ Into Hanover-square,” she answered.

“ I promised Amica, for a very particular reason, that she should see me the moment I returned to town ; and I wish to keep my promise to her.”

Desisting from pouring out the requested coffee, although not an hundred drops had

yet been put into the cup, Sir Jasper, prefacing his account with an exclamation of that emphatic nature which fixed the attention of his daughter, imparted to her all that had that day passed between himself and our heroine.

Lady Dellaval heard him to the end of his narrative without interruption ; when he had concluded it, " Amica not the daughter of Lady Buckhurst !" she ejaculated, " great God, how extraordinary !—Amica not the daughter of Lady Buckhurst !" she repeated, and in a lower tone she added, " Whose daughter can she be then ?" and these words being spoken, she appeared to sink into reflection.

Sir Jasper took up the thread of conversation by beginning to expatiate on the heroism of his own conduct.—Lady Dellaval interrupted him ; taking his hand, and pressing it in her's, " Oh my father !" she exclaimed.—The address was new to the ears of the Baronet, and his surprise increased, " Oh my father, you know not how worthy a girl you have spared ;—how noble, how excellent an action you have performed."

"Yes, I *am* fully sensible of it," replied the Baronet.

"No, no, not so fully as I am," returned Lady Dellaval. "You do not know in its full extent, how happy a circumstance is the command which you have this day maintained over your passions."

"Why how?—What do you mean?" said Sir Jasper.

Lady Dellaval carried the coffee-cup to her lips, and with marks of the greatest agitation of mind drank the few drops which her father had poured into it.

"You express yourself with great warmth," continued the Baronet, "and appear very strongly interested about this young woman."

"I am extremely so," rejoined Lady Dellaval. "I never yet knew any one of my own sex for whom I entertained the regard I do for Amica—I love her."

"So do I," returned Sir Jasper, "passionately, tenderly."

"Were she my daughter, I could adore her," continued Lady Dellaval.

"Or your mother?" said the Baronet.

"No," answered Lady Dellaval, "no."

"No!" echoed Sir Jasper, "Why it is not a month ago since you agreed with me in believing that she would make me an excellent second wife."

"I think now that you will never find so good a one," replied her Ladyship.

"And yet you say now, that you should not love her if you beheld her in that character," rejoined the Baronet.

"Circumstances have a most unlimited power in influencing our opinions," returned Lady Dellaval. "When I first recommended her as a wife to you, I did not know her so well as I do now; I believed her then to be a good girl—I have since discovered her to be an excellent, a glorious one."

"Do you mean to say, that you have since discovered her to be too good for me?" asked Sir Jasper, in a tone of pique.

"At that time," replied Lady Dellaval, "I considered her like most other girls placed in her situation of life, eager to be settled in the world as her own mistress, and a married woman; and judging a title of the first importance to happiness—I saw that you were determined to marry; and considering the chances to be against your

meeting with any woman who would so honourably fulfil to you the duties of her station, as I believed that she would do, I recommended you to turn your thoughts towards her."

"I must give you my thanks for your consideration towards me thus far," replied Sir Jasper. "Whether I shall owe them to you, when you have informed me what has worked the change in your sentiments, I know not."

"I have since that time discovered that her opinions are widely different from those of the generality of young women in her rank of life; that she places the happiness which she expects to derive from marriage, in the congeniality of sentiments and age which shall subsist between her husband and herself; and that till she can unite herself with the man whom she can esteem, she is satisfied to remain subject to the authority of others, rather than to become nominally her own mistress."

"If she insists upon similarity of age," said Sir Jasper, "undoubtedly in that single instance I am not exactly correspondent with her rule of matrimonial happiness—

but that difficulty might, perhaps, I think, be overruled, if in other respects she could be induced to believe me the man calculated to"——

"Impossible, Sir!—impossible!" ejaculated Lady Dellaval.

"Do you suppose then," demanded the Baronet, "that if the discovery of her not being the daughter of Lady Buckhurst had not taken place at this critical juncture, that she would not have been won to give me her hand out of consideration to the benefits I had promised to confer on her family; in remuneration for that blessing?"

"I am certain that she would not," replied Lady Dellaval; "if she had even deliberated upon it, she would have lost my regard."

"And why so, pray?" asked Sir Jasper sharply. "You appear as if you delighted to speak in ænigmas: would it have been a crime?"

"Yes," replied his daughter, "the crime of breaking those promises of constancy which she has made to one deserving of her affection; and of utterly destroying those hopes which she has encouraged him to entertain."

“Hum!” ejaculated Sir Jasper:—“her heart then is disposed of.—I take it for granted,” he added, after a short pause, “that this is also a discovery which you have made since the period of your recommending her to me as a wife.”

These words were spoken by Sir Jasper in a tone of satirical discontent. Lady Dellaval returned to them a simple and serious affirmative.

Another pause ensued—Sir Jasper broke it. “It is true then what what has been whispered of the attachment borne to Amica by Colonel Buckhurst? And yet if he be the man she selects, it appears inconceivably strange, that he who governs in his father’s house should have permitted the expulsion from it of one who possesses his heart.”

“Can you for a moment suppose that a girl all amiable, as I have just described Amica to you, could have encouraged the addresses of such a man as Colonel Buckhurst?” exclaimed Lady Dellaval, with some warmth.

“He is one of your particular friends, Lady Catherine,” replied Sir Jasper.

“He has been one of my necessary appendages in the life of dissipation which I

have been silly enough to lead for some years past; but it is not possible, (as I dare say you know from better experience than mine, Sir) nor necessary, to *esteem* all those whose *acquaintance* is acceptable to us. You know also, Sir," she added with emphasis, "that a life of this nature was not my choice, but my resource."

The Baronet hemmed, took a pinch of snuff, poured out another cup of coffee, and employed himself some minutes in sweetening and drinking it; whilst the changes in his countenance appeared to indicate that some unpleasant reflections were passing in his mind: at length he said, "And who—who did you say was the happy man that possessed Amica's heart?"

Having mentioned the name of Maurice Stanton, Lady Dellaval proceeded for some minutes to expatiate on the excellent qualities of his heart and understanding, which eulogies she concluded with the exclamation of "How sincerely I pity them!"

"Pity them!" replied Sir Jasper. "Why do you pity them? You represent them possessed of every happiness in each other's affection."



“ Because,” returned Lady Dellaval, “ there are obstacles to their union, which it may prove very difficult to them to surmount.”

“ Difficulties sweeten love to young and sensitive minds,” returned the Baronet.

“ It must be then when attended by a cheering prospect of their concluding in bliss,” answered Lady Dellaval; “ and O how exquisite, how unbounded is the gratitude which young and fervent minds feel for the hand which kindly stretches itself out to extricate them from the labyrinth of doubt and fear !”

“ The knowledge of possessing the gratitude of a lovely girl, like Amica, is a sensation secondary only to that of possessing her affection,” said Sir Jasper: “ I have to-day experienced it, you know; and I feel more than ever convinced, that the man who communicates happiness to the heart of one of the sex communicates happiness at the same moment to his own.”

“ And the greater the happiness he is able to confer on a deserving object of that sex, the greater must be the reward of his own feelings !” exclaimed her Ladyship.

"Yes, it must—it must!" replied Sir Jasper.

"Pursue that plan towards Amica then," rejoined Lady Dellaval; "and reap the golden harvest of her grateful smiles."

"Pursue!" echoed Sir Jasper. "How? Which way?—I don't understand what you require."

"Resolve to banish from your memory," answered Lady Dellaval, "the recollection of your ever having regarded her with a more tender consideration than that of a friend desirous of promoting her happiness; and having brought yourself to this determination, continue to act towards her the part of that valuable friend."

The countenance of the Baronet expressed that he found some difficulty in becoming a philosopher in this respect.

"She is now but negatively blest," Lady Dellaval continued: "you have preserved her indeed from misery; but it is in your power to be the instrument of her attaining the summit of felicity. What would then be her gratitude towards you! By all the world you would be known and respected as the

giver of happiness to one of the handsomest and most deserving women in it, whilst she herself would consider it impossible for her to confer on you sufficient proofs of her esteem."

"You draw an alluring picture," returned Sir Jasper, "to place before the eyes of a man who is an epicure in attaching to himself the favourable sentiments of pretty women."

He paused.—Lady Dellaval perceived him to be expecting from her an explanation of the hints which she had been throwing out to catch his attention, and said, "Your intercession, Sir, would not fail to bring over to their cause the grandfather of Maurice Stanton, who has not yet given his consent to their union."

"Would it?" replied Sir Jasper. "My intercession!—Who is the gentleman?—Do I know him?"

"Yes, extremely well," answered Lady Dellaval.

"Indeed!" returned Sir Jasper. "Pray name him to me."

"For a reason of a very particular nature," replied Lady Dellaval, "I am bound not to

tell you who he is, unless you shall promise to interest yourself warmly with him in the cause of Amica; and then only to give you that information in her presence."

"From the nature of this condition," said the Baronet, "it appears as if Amica and you had held a consultation together upon this business."

"I confess we have done so," replied Lady Dellaval; "the last time of my seeing her, she interested me so strongly in her favour that I promised her my eternal friendship, and that I would endeavour to prevail on you to act the part so essential to her happiness."

"Then Amica herself expressed a wish of my interceding for her with Mr. Stanton's grandfather?" demanded Sir Jasper.

Lady Dellaval replied in the affirmative.

Sir Jasper continued thus: "But at that time, that is when you last saw her we must recollect she was the acknowledged daughter of Lady Buckhurst: I should feel myself very awkward in executing the task of recommending it to any man of condition to suffer his grandson to connect himself with one whose origin is not at all known."

“ Oh no, no, my dear Sir!” replied Lady Dellaval. “ Believe me, that if you will urge your suit to him, this idea upon which you ground your apprehensions of its being rejected, will not militate against an event favourable to the young people; provided only the suit to that effect comes from you: and why should you fear its rejection?—Would not you yourself even, now, if there were no obstacle to prevent it, freely give your own hand to Amica? The grandfather of Mr. Stanton is by no means more than your equal in rank, and why should you suppose that he possesses less liberality of sentiment than yourself?—Why should he not perceive, as I am sure you do, that although not now the daughter of Lady Buckhurst, Amica is equally possessed of all those excellent qualities of the heart, all those enchanting graces of the person, which drew upon her admiration when she was so; and which leave her still admirable for herself, now she is not. Mr. Stanton is the legal heir of his grandfather, whose possessions are now infinitely more than sufficient for comfort, or even grandeur; why then should you apprehend that he should be

blind to the conviction of the most desirable dower which his grandson can obtain in marriage, being those qualities which will enhance to him the enjoyment of his other blessings ?

After many more persuasions to the same effect on the part of Lady Dellaval, the Baronet appearing strongly to incline towards an acquiescence in her suit, promised to reflect upon it till the morning, and to give her his decisive reply before the hour at which she had told him she intended visiting Amica; for their conversation had sunk so deeply into the night that her Ladyship now judged it prudent to defer her visit till the succeeding day.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Action.*

**T**HE Baronet was a man whose feelings were never sufficiently strong upon any occasion either to curtail him of his sleep, or deprive him of his appetite; accordingly, upon entering his bed, he slept as well as usual, and on being waked, about the hour of two in the morning, he partook with his accustomed zest of the hot veal cutlets and eggs which were offered to the gratification of his palate. After this nightly whet, it was his usual custom to continue sitting up in his bed, for about half an hour, in order to give his powers of digestion a fairer chance of performing their duty than they could have while he was in a recumbent posture; and this half hour he resolved to dedicate to the subject which he had promised Lady Dellaval should occupy some portion of his thoughts before they met again.

It is not the sign of a bad heart, but of a weak understanding, when a man must be spurred on to the performance of a meritorious action by the degree of credit which is to result to him in the opinion of the world from his conduct: we must not, therefore, consider Sir Jasper entirely unentitled to praise when we are informed that he determined to exert himself in the cause of Amica's happiness, because we are so well acquainted with his character as to know that by vanity alone he was actuated in his determination—and for this reason; because we must allow that it was much more commendable in him to act from any motive towards the real happiness of a woman, who could not be happy in the contemplation of him as a husband, than to act towards her from a worse impulse than that of vanity, the part which an ancient fable tells us was played by a certain dog in a manger.

In how high estimation, he considered, must his opinion be held, if it were regarded as a decided point, that his intercession would carry the voice of Mr. Stanton's grandfather in favour of his grandson's union with Amica! In every circle of fashion, Amica's charms



were known and admired: Lady Dellaval had represented to him the grandfather of Mr. Stanton as a man equal in rank and fortune to himself; of course various paragraphs concerning the marriage would appear in the daily prints; and in these, after the heroic and generous conduct which he had resolved upon, he could not fail to be held forth in a particularly distinguished light!—The transaction, in short, could not fail to give him notoriety, and to gain him the greatest credit.

He slept again, and rising at his usual hour, met Lady Dellaval at breakfast. He immediately informed her what had been the result of his meditations: with the most apparent satisfaction she heard his declaration, and replied to it by saying, “Do but, Sir, go through with this undertaking in the spirited manner in which you speak of it, and great indeed will be the pride and esteem with which I shall regard my father.”

“Do not fear me,” returned Sir Jasper, “I am animated by the idea of the laurels which will be wound round my reputation.”

"We will both visit Amica this morning," said Lady Dellaval: "she cannot be too soon informed of her happiness; I will, therefore, go to her immediately after breakfast; and in half an hour after, you shall, if you please, follow me; I will employ the interval in imparting to her your generous intentions, and in preparing her to receive you as her best friend."

To this arrangement Sir Jasper agreed, but pressed his daughter now he had finally promised to make the desired appeal in behalf of the young couple to Mr. Stanton's grandfather, to inform him who that gentleman was, in order that he might be the better prepared for his interview with him; to which Lady Dellaval had hinted that it was likely Amica would that very morning conduct him: but her Ladyship declared that she had pledged her solemn promise to Amica, not to tell him, except in her presence; and that, therefore, out of regard to her word, she must defer it until they were with her.

The Baronet ridiculed his daughter's scruples, but could not laugh her out of a strict observance of them.

Breakfast being concluded, her Ladyship set out in her chariot for Langford's hotel, and in about half an hour after, Sir Jasper followed her.

On arriving at the hotel, he was met at the door by Mrs. Acton herself, who conducted him up stairs into a handsome dining-room, where he found Lady Dellaval and Amica, whose eyes betrayed them both to have been weeping.

For some time the conversation of all the party bore evident marks of the confusion of their minds; Lady Dellaval then said, "If Amica could summon sufficient courage, Sir, she would inquire of you, whether you really have promised to exert your influence for the happiness of her future life. She almost believes that I am deceiving her, when I tell her that you have done so; and can only be perfectly convinced of the truth, by your own assertion to that effect."

"As a proof, my dear Madam," said Sir Jasper, addressing Amica, "how earnestly your happiness was my desire, when I requested you to bestow your hand on me, I have pledged my word to become the intercessor for you to be allowed to bestow it on

him, your union with whom promises you that felicity of which it is my wish to see you possessed."

"And do you really promise this? Kind, generous, noble-hearted man!" exclaimed Amica.

"Yes," answered Sir Jasper, "if it is in my power to remove any obstacle which may at present exist to your marriage with Mr. Stanton, and to conciliate his grandfather to your union, I pledge my honor to exert myself to the utmost of my ability for the accomplishment of this desired end."

The tears burst afresh into the eyes of Amica, and she hid her face on the bosom of Lady Dellaval; who, on her part, appeared little less agitated than her fair protégée.

"Now then," said Sir Jasper, continuing to address Amica, "it alone remains for you to inform me who Mr. Stanton's grandfather is."

"I will answer that inquiry," said Lady Dellaval; as she spoke, she drew from her pocket a red morocco case, which contained the miniature that it will be recollected her Ladyship shewed on the day succeeding her

masked ball, at Sir Benjamin Buckhurst's, as a trinket which had been found on the preceding night in one of her rooms:— After a moment's hesitation, she it put into the hand of Sir Jasper, accompanying her action by saying, "This portrait will give you every information; in that you will behold Maurice Stanton's father."

After a few moment's contemplation,— "Stanton's father!" echoed Sir Jasper.— "Why this is—yes it must, I cannot be mistaken—this is Arlington!"

"Remember your promise; remember you have pledged your honour to its fulfilling!" exclaimed in the wildest accents, Lady Dellaval.

"This *is* Arlington then," said Sir Jasper, convinced in his surmises by the emotion of his daughter; "this *is* Arlington, and Stanton *is* your son!"

"My pride, my glory?" returned Lady Dellaval; "one, whose restoration to me renders existence more valuable than it ever was before; one who will add another blessing to a mother's life, by making this amiable girl my child also."

The Baronet did not speak; he looked

alternately with a varying countenance upon his daughter and Amica.

"Recollect, dear Sir," said Lady Dellaval, taking his hand in her's, and pressing it as she spoke, "recollect that you have pledged your word to use every means in your power for prevailing on the grandfather of Maurice Stanton to consent to his union with Amica—his grandfather cannot therefore upon his own conditions withhold his accordance to their petition."

"But I have not promised," replied Sir Jasper, "to acknowledge him as my legal heir; therefore as I do not consider him as my grandson, my consent cannot be requisite to the union at all."

Amica burst into tears;—Lady Dellaval fell at her father's feet "Oh Sir," she exclaimed, "I entreat you to suffer the suit which is presented to your consideration to sink into your heart; has not the false pride which actuated you in separating me from the only man on earth I ever loved, driven me to become a character I detest to reflect upon; and to seek dissipation and extravagance as a relief for my tortured feelings?—would you, now all the affection

which I bore that man is revived within my breast, by beholding my son the exact resemblance of what his father was, debar me of the happiness of cherishing in him the recollection of my long lost hopes?—my ideas are now different; my resolution stronger than it was when I calmly suffered myself to be divided from him, to whom love and religion bound me; I can no longer cast off my own offspring, though you cast me off, because I cannot steel my heart against him.”

Still the baronet did not speak.

“ In your principle of deriving happiness from conferring it on my sex, am I, your daughter, to be the only exception to your general rule ?” demanded Lady Dellaval.

“ You will not be the only exception, if you are doomed to be one at all”, said Amica; “ my affections are too closely linked with yours, for me to taste happiness while you are denied it ?”

Instead of being held up to the world as the excellent and admirable character to which Sir Jasper had a few hours before believed that his intercession with the grandfather of Maurice Stanton would have en-

titled him, whilst he was ignorant who that grandfather was, he now perceived that if he could not speedily reconcile himself to accede to Lady Dellaval's suit, he would on the contrary be represented to it as a selfish, unfeeling old fellow, who had sacrificed the happiness of his own daughter, and of an amiable girl, to the caprice of his ill-tempered opinions:—Now an old man who is an admirer of the sex, and who does not intend to relinquish the pursuit of that passion, even when the passion has entirely left him, dreads no accusation so much as that of ill-temper; his accommodating manners can alone render him endurable to females, and therefore the moment he is reported to be tetchy, or surly, he loses all chance of being tolerated by them—upon this consideration the baronet spoke thus: “ I have already told Amica, that I never will be lax in my exertions to promote her happiness, in order that I may by this rule prove to her how earnestly that end was my desire when I first made her an offer of my own hand; and I consider it as no small flattery to myself that she should refuse to accept Stanton as her hus-



band in any character but that of my grandson ;—I cannot help pleasing myself with the idea, that if I had been as youthful as he is, I might not perhaps have been an unsuccessful wooer."

Lady Dellaval kissed the hand of her father with a rapturous expression of gratitude, and moved to the window, to relieve her heart by giving vent to her tears.

" Now your consent is obtained," said Amica, " I shrink within myself at the idea of having suffered it to be asked :—When I first admitted Maurice Stanton to my heart, we were alike the children of a generous protector's benevolence ; our situations in life were equal ; now he is risen in fortune's scale, I cannot help feeling myself an intruder upon his prosperity ; and fearing that I must be considered so by those with whom he is connected."

" Oh forbear, forbear, my dearest Amica," exclaimed Lady Dellaval, " have you not every qualification to render you the pride and ornament of those connexions—every virtue to endear you to their hearts, and every claim upon their affection, in pos-

sessing the love of him through whom you will become allied to them?"

"And if the young fellow has any of my fire in his composition," exclaimed Sir Jasper, "he will feel himself doubly blest at being admitted to a rank in life which will enable him to exalt the condition of the woman who inspires him with admiration—the man who really loves, never thinks he is able to bestow sufficient happiness on the object of his admiration."

## CHAPTER XII.

*The Mother's Tale.*

WE must now dedicate a few pages to the private history of Lady Dellaval, and explain the apparent mystery of her being a mother.

We have already seen in the short sketch which Sidney Valmont gave, in a former part of this history, to the Buckhurst family, of her Ladyship's life, that she had the misfortune to be deprived of her maternal parent at a very early age, and to be entirely left to the care, and direction of gouvernantes; her father paying infinitely more attention to his own amusements, than either to the happiness or education of his daughter.

Amongst the numerous persons to whom was entrusted the formation of her ladyship's mind and manners, her greatest favorite was a female whose particular de-

partment it was to communicate to her pupil a knowledge of the graces ; her name was Arlington :—Soon after Lady Dellaval had completed her fifteenth year, Miss Arlington received a visit from a brother of hers, who held a curacy in the adjoining county :—He was a young man of genteel address, handsome person, and pleasing manners ; as the guest of her *gouvernante*, he became the acquaintance of Lady Dellaval, and he left an impression on her heart which was but a very short time a secret to Miss Arlington.

Frequent are the instances when persons placed in the situation of Miss Arlington, have not the fortitude or principle to prefer the interest of the young person with whose charge they are entrusted, to their own ; and Miss Arlington by no means possessed this laudable command over herself : she considered, that a match with the sole daughter and heiress of Sir Jasper Wormeaten, must, in any point of view, be a most glorious advantage for her brother : that she should rise in situation with him in such a case ; and that therefore on her own account, as well as his, it was “ a consummation de-

voutly to be wished." To this end she was continually repeating to Lady Dellaval the ardent passion which was entertained for her by her brother Frederic, and taking every opportunity in her power of throwing them in the way of each other; the event of which intrigue was, that when scarcely three months turned of sixteen, Lady Dellaval was prevailed upon to elope with the brother of her governess.

They reached Scotland in safety; and thence they removed to a spot of retirement from the world; but although Frederic Arlington had managed to raise the sum requisite for transporting himself and his wife from Wiltshire to the land of hymeneal liberty, his means were now utterly expended, and they were both entirely destitute of that most requisite of all ingredients—money.

In this deplorable situation they found themselves before the first week of their honeymoon was elapsed; and as the only clue to extricate them from their labyrinth of difficulties, Mrs. Arlington wrote to her father imploring his pardon and assistance.

Her letter conveyed to the Baronet all the information which he was anxious to receive

concerning them, namely the place of their retreat, for which he immediately set out.—He arrived at their cottage of love, at a time when Mrs. Arlington happened to be alone in it—He compelled her immediately to enter his carriage ; and having given a small packet in charge to a person of the house for Arlington on his return, he took his seat by her in the chaise, and ordered the postilions to drive off.

Although she had little doubt but that her husband was directly to follow her, still she wept that she had not seen him to bid him farewell, even for the short time she believed they were to be separated from each other ; but when she learnt that it was her father's positive decision that she should never behold him again, her ravings were little short of madness.—Having conducted her to his mansion in Wiltshire, and placed her under the care of those from whose custody he took effective means to prevent her escape, he proceeded to London.

The packet which he had left at the cottage for Arlington, contained a letter from the Baronet wherein he commanded him to meet him at the expiration of a week in

London ; having terms, he said, which he should then propose to him for the regulation of his future life ;—the packet contained also a sum of money sufficient to defray his expences up to the metropolis.—Whatever designs the Baronet might have in view, Arlington concluded, that, situated as he was, he could not do better than to make a shew of obedience to his wife's father, by following the directions which he had received.

In London accordingly they met : Arlington was received by Sir Jasper with that inflexible pride and haughtiness which he expected ; but he did not expect the sentence which he received from his lips ;—after some preliminary discourse the Baronet thus addressed him : “ You are a very young man, and therefore are not perhaps acquainted how far the step of which you have been guilty, renders you amenable to the laws of your country.—It is in my power to arraign you in a court of justice for the crime of having stolen an heiress of minor years ; the consequence of your conviction would be the imposition of a fine beyond what it is in your power to pay, and you

would thus become a prisoner for life ; your sister also might be made a sharer in your punishment, as an accomplice in the act ;—but it is not my design to deal thus harshly with you ; I have the ability to get you instantly appointed to a chaplainship in a regiment which is at this hour embarking for the East Indies ;—if therefore you choose to accept it, I shall appoint proper persons to see you on board the vessel this very day ; if you refuse, I shall instantly proceed to enter against you a process at law :—But remember also, that I procure you this appointment upon the condition of your never breathing a syllable relative to your marriage ; the instant I can prove a word to that effect to have fallen from your lips, I revoke my favor towards you, and change my conduct to such as the law will authorize me to exert.”

The confusion of Arlington’s mind, and the disagreeable state of his feelings, may be easily imagined ; he was not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the laws to be able to reply by any effective argument to those advanced by Sir Jasper ; and probably not heroic enough in his love to be able to



endure the idea of utter ruin from a perseverance in the rashness he had committed, he embraced the plan which the Baronet offered to his acceptance.

Sir Jasper having thus succeeded in removing Arlington from the country where his presence must have been inimical to his proud views, he next turned his thoughts towards Arlington's sister, who also had it in her power to divulge the secret which must prove a stab to the future prospects of his ill-guided daughter ; accordingly having, without much difficulty, convinced Miss Arlington that a propagation of the truth on her part must prove utter ruin to her own character in the situation she was fated to move in through life, as it must prevent any mother from placing confidence in her as the protectress of her daughter, he prevailed upon her to accept the place of teacher in a family with which he was acquainted, who were on the point of setting out for Russia ; and at parting he gave her an hundred pounds as a *douceur* farther to ensure her, if possible, from tattling.

These two dangerous persons being removed, Sir Jasper returned to his own home,

where he had left his daughter in the care of those who had faithfully fulfilled the trust reposed in them, without a knowledge of the cause from which their services had been demanded.—He found his daughter in that wretched state of mind which was to be expected from a girl of her age deprived of the first object of her love; he informed her of the steps he had taken; and the firmness of his manner, by leaving her no hope of beholding her husband again, almost drove her to desperation.

To remove her from the observation of his neighbours in her present state of mind, the Baronet judged judicious, as he hoped it might prove advantageous to the tranquillizing of her spirits, by giving her new and varying objects for her contemplation; he accordingly resolved to travel with her for a year; and to this end he took her from Wiltshire as soon as a few hasty preparations could be made for that purpose.

Their only female attendant was a woman of rather advanced years; she had lived in the service of his late wife, and had ever since been retained as a member of his household; he believed her sufficiently attached to his

family by the benefits which she had received from it, to bury in secrecy the cause of his daughter's grief, if she were ever tempted to communicate to one of her own sex the source of her evident infelicity.

The season of the year was that of summer, and they immediately proceeded into Wales. Sir Jasper engaged a habitation in one of the most romantic spots of the principality, and by constantly wandering with his daughter amidst the everchanging beauties of the country, he entertained the hope of soothing her mind, and diverting it in the course of time from its favourite subject of reflection : When about three months had been passed by them in this manner of life, that discovery which had alone haunted the imagination of Sir Jasper since his dismissal of Arlington from England, was made to him—his daughter was about to become a mother.

The Baronet had foreseen the probability of this event, and therefore his mind was not unprepared to encounter. Without permitting her a voice in any instance relative to the imprudent step of which she had been guilty, he considered it almost a condescension in him to inform her of his plans for the

concealment of what he denominated, her shame.

We have already said, that Sir Jasper and his daughter had with them a confidential female servant; this woman whose name was Smith, had frequently received visits in Wiltshire from a man named Winstanley, of whom Mrs. Arlington knew no more than that he was called Smith's lover, and said to enjoy a small post under government; but of what nature this situation was, or where he resided, she was entirely ignorant:—about six weeks before the time of her confinement this man appeared at their Welch residence, and was in the course of a few days after his arrival, married to Mrs. Smith, and admitted by Sir Jasper an inhabitant of his house; and at the expiration of a few more days he again departed.

At length arrived the time of Mrs. Arlington's release from her burden; and the fruit of her marriage proved a boy:—As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to be able to travel, she was required by her father to take leave of Mrs. Winstanley and her child; and was informed by him that she must not entertain the idea of ever seeing either of

them again:"—"He had," he said, "settled two hundred a year upon the child for its life; and had given Mr. Winstanley a thousand pounds upon the condition of his returning at the expiration of another year into Wales, and taking back with him his wife and the child, to his own abode, as the widow of a Welch clergyman, with whom he had accidentally become acquainted and married; and the child was to pass for the offspring of her first marriage."

Mrs. Arlington had requested that her child might be named Frederick after his father, but had never been able to gain information whether her wish had been complied with; she entreated to be told where Mr. Winstanley's residence was, but in this desire likewise she was not gratified; Sir Jasper refusing to give her any knowledge which might ever lead her to behold the offspring of her ill-advised marriage again.

With regret she parted from her child; but it was a trivial inquietude compared with that which rent her breast when she reflected on her separation from her husband.

On leaving Wales the Baronet immediately repaired with his daughter to a fashionable watering-place, as a prelude to her public introduction to the great world in London. A very short time after their arrival on this spot, intelligence reached Sir Jasper, which, although it communicated infinite satisfaction and relief to his feelings, he had still enough of the father in his heart to be for some time apprehensive of communicating to his daughter; and this intelligence was, the death of Arlington, who had fallen a victim to the climate, a very few weeks after his landing in India.

The object of his resentment being removed from the power of causing any further interruption to his views for his daughter, Sir Jasper used every tenderness in communicating to her the event of his death.—For a time she sunk into a desponding melancholy, which if not speedily overcome, appeared materially to threaten her health. Sir Jasper trusting to the efficacy of novel scenes, flattery, admiration, and every soother of the female mind, to win her thoughts from the dead, by fixing them upon the living, used every means in his power for

giving her a worldly consequence which might call her thoughts from herself.—In the course of about six months he so far succeeded in his plan, that his daughter beginning to feel the pleasures which were offered to her acceptance, a relief for the torturing reflections which corroded her breast, indulged in them, not because they were what she best loved, but because she found them short lived opiates to her cares.

Having once begun to admit the gaieties of fashionable life as Lethean draughts to her sorrowing soul, her pursuit of them daily increased; not because her heart became daily more devoted to pleasure, but because the relief she experienced from dissipation was so unsubstantial as to require frequent changes and augmentations to preserve to it the power which she required from it.—Most of the fashionable men with whom she formed intimacies, she despised; but still she dreaded the solitude of her own reflections too much not to use every means of inducing them to flutter round her; but although she received the attentions of all, there was not one whom she could endure the idea of

admitting to her heart, and she almost believed that she should never marry a second time.— But at length perceiving that she was arriving at an age when she could no longer command the adoration of the votaries of fashion as a single woman, and that marriage alone could still keep them in her train, she bestowed her hand without any preference for the man, upon Sir John Dellaval.

Sir John was a man of weak intellects and ordinary person; a man by no means calculated to efface from her mind the recollection of her first and only love; the comparison was constantly in her ideas, and misery habitually the inmate of her heart:— Sir John had only one qualification which could act as a softener of her lot, and this was his wealth; a free access to which he permitted her, and with which she used to purchase those pleasures which in the short period of their enjoyment procured her the happiness of forgetting herself.

At the end of a few years Sir John died:— during the period that the forms of decorum required of her a seclusion from the world, to which no regret for his loss prompted her; the thoughts of Lady Dellaval took a new



turn ; she had often requested of her father to inform her whether her son were alive, and he had replied to her inquiries in the affirmative, but still strictly withheld from her a knowledge of his destiny and residence.—That son she considered must now be eighteen years of age ; how should she enjoy to clasp him to her breast ! to tell him her affection for his father ! the idea communicated more real pleasure to her mind than any she had yet tasted since her separation from Arlington ; and she resolved the moment her father had paid the debt of nature, to discover his retreat, and acknowledge him her son.

This resolution being formed, her next determination was not to exceed the limits of her annual income, that she might preserve her property undiminished, for the purpose of bequeathing it to him, who now occupied her whole mind :—The daily extravagance of which she saw her father guilty in his pursuit of the sex, was her greatest cause of anxiety ; for she was now so much engrossed with her plans for deriving the happiness of the latter years of her own existence from the happiness which she should have it in her power to bestow on her son, that every

curtailment of her expectations gave her pain.

But much as she disliked the continual diminutions which Sir Jasper's purse sustained by his repeated gallantries, she dreaded still more his marriage with any unprincipled woman, who might not only wantonly squander away his fortune, but inherit the greater share of such property as he might die possessed of:—Still she believed that could any woman of principle be induced to give him her hand, his expences would, in consequence of his union with such a woman, become considerably less, and his principal accordingly increase, which might otherwise be entirely lavished away.

Time passed on: Sir Jasper was still a widower, and Lady Dellaval convinced that his intention of forming a second connection was as strong as ever:—At this period she first became acquainted with Amica; in her she beheld a female sufficiently beautiful, she believed, to attract the love of her father, and maintain his heart indivisibly her's, if she could be prevailed upon to become his wife; a female endowed with so much good sense, that no inordinate waste of his pro-

perty was to be dreaded at her hands;—a female in every respect the most desirable to the relations of an old man resolved on uniting himself with a young woman.

In professing an attachment to Amica, Lady Dellaval professed no more than she really felt; she discovered her to have an excellent heart, and a noble disposition; and she pleased herself with the idea of one day, when she was become the widow of Sir Jasper, interesting her feelings in the fate of her son.

We have already seen that the high character for beauty and fashion which was given of Amica by Lady Dellaval to her father, produced the effect which she desired from it, of rendering him the captive of her charms; and her Ladyship trusted that her masked ball, although only the second time of their meeting each other, would complete her success; placing, from her observance upon others, great faith in the powers of an entertainment of this nature to produce an effect in affairs of the heart, which a thousand meetings of a less romantic kind, could not have the power to bring about.

At the supper which formed a part of this entertainment, whilst her Ladyship's head was filled with plans for the future restoration of her beloved Arlington's son to his rights, she was startled by the strong resemblance of Maurice Stanton to the person of that beloved Arlington!—unable to divert from him her attention, she challenged him to take a glass of wine with her: The voice in which he delivered his reply to her invitation, reminded her as strongly of the tones of Arlington, as his features had brought to her memory his countenance.

After she had retired from the supper table, she saw him no more that night:—The moment her guests were departed, and she was at liberty to enter her chamber, she took from her cabinet a miniature of Arlington, which he had presented her with previously to their marriage; she compared it with the features of the youth whom she had that evening heard called Stanton; the resemblance was strikingly great; and she almost ventured to believe that she had in him beheld her son.

She had observed that this young man had entered her apartments with the Buckhursts,

and had sat next to Amica at supper; from these observations she concluded that he must be one of their intimate acquaintance, and that from them she should be best able to gain such information as she wished for concerning him:—On the following morning accordingly, she had no sooner concluded her breakfast, than she repaired into Hanover-square, taking with her the miniature of her lost Arlington, for the purpose of learning whether the resemblance which in her eyes it bore to Stanton, would be alike discernible to others; and in order to obviate all unpleasant questions upon the subject, she resolved to say that it had been dropped the evening before in her ball-room.

We have already learnt that the resemblance was perceived not only by Amica, but by Maurice Stanton himself:—Their coincidence of opinion with her own, increased the perturbation of her Ladyship's feelings, and she followed Amica to her chamber, where she learnt from her all which she herself knew of Stanton's history; namely that he was a young man without relations, and the protégé of the benevolent Mr. Leuwitzer.

These particulars strengthened Lady Delaval materially in the opinion that she had already formed of Stanton being her son, but in what manner to procure any certain information on the subject, caused her a few days of anxious and perplexing deliberation; for although well acquainted by the tongue of common fame, with the benevolent character of Mr. Leuwitzer, she could not immediately prevail on herself to open to him her heart; at last, however, she summoned fortitude to dispatch to him a note, requesting him to favor her with his presence that evening at her house.

On arriving at it, he was ushered into her Ladyship's dressing-room:—she received him with an apology for the liberty of which she had been guilty;—the suavity of his manners, dispelled instantly the small degree of doubt and apprehension which lingered in her breast at the idea of admitting him, a stranger as he was to her, to the confidence of her inmost heart:—Having requested, and obtained from him a promise of secrecy upon such circumstances as she might that evening reveal to his knowledge; she proceeded to recount to him the events of her early life:—

Her narrative being concluded, she stated to him the suspicions which now filled her mind, and the grounds from whence they arose ; - beseeching his assistance towards the developement of the truth. ;

Mr. Leuwitzer confessed that the tale which she had unfolded to him, inclined him to entertain suspicions very similar to her own :—What little Maurice Stanton knew of his own history, corresponded with the little which Lady Dellaval knew of the fate of her son :—Maurice believed himself to be the son of a curate who had died whilst he was yet in his early infancy ; as such Sir Jasper, immediately after his birth, had informed his daughter, that it had been agreed he was to pass in the world, and that his nominal mother was to be represented to it, after her marriage with Winstanley, as the widow of that curate :—From the first moment of his recollection of his mother, she had been the reputed second wife of a man, who in the character of a father-in-law, had never conducted himself towards him with either kindness or affection, and who on the death of his supposed mother, had entirely discarded him from his protection.

As circumstances flowed from the lips of Mr. Leuwitzer, which appeared to corroborate the evidence her senses had already received, Lady Dellaval wept, lamenting in her tears the hard fate of a faultless being to whom she had given birth; and who had been driven from his mother's protection by the impulse of a false and unfeeling pride on the part of him who had exerted his authority over her to that effect, "Whatever be the event of my resolution," she exclaimed, "if I prove him to be my child, I will as far as lies within the limits of my power, repair to him the injustice he has hitherto laboured under, by immediately declaring his affinity to me; and oh! what would be my extacy if I had a father for my unfortunate child."

Which expression accounts for the words overheard by the curious and impertinent waiting women, Archer and Lenox; and which were conveyed into a most able channel for publication, by being imparted by the latter to her mistress, Lady Buckhurst.

Thus impressed, the gratitude of Lady Dellaval to the man who had supplied to her



son the tenderness of a parent, which she had herself been withheld from bestowing on him, may be easily imagined; and we are already too well acquainted with the excellence of Mr. Leuwitzer's heart to doubt that he entered with the warmth of a true friend into the noble purpose of her mind.

The first step requisite to be taken by him towards the elucidation of an affair at present wrapt in mystery, Mr. Leuwitzer considered to be that of inquiring of Maurice Stanton, the name and residence of his supposed father-in-law; for this purpose he took him apart on the following morning, and having learnt from him that Winstanley had actually been the name of this man, he immediately proceeded to inquire for him at the admiralty, in which public office he had held an inferior station at the time Stanton had last seen him, which was now full twelve years ago.

The result of Mr. Leuwitzer's inquiries at the Admiralty was, that Winstanley had long ago quitted his situation there, and was now believed to be a post-master in Scotland, at a town which his informer named to him:—No sooner had he received

this intelligence, than with the usual humanity of his excellent heart, he conceived the idea of himself proceeding into Scotland, and by endeavouring to see Winstanley, use every means in his power for ascertaining the origin of his protégé; but before he had an opportunity of communicating his intention to Lady Dellaval, his purpose was changed by the summons which he so unexpectedly received to pass over into Germany, to the relief and consolation of his widowed sister:—Still, although his attention was called to the fate of those so much more nearly connected with the feelings of his heart, he did not entirely cease to think of those to whom he had promised his friendship; but snatching an hour from his own affairs to devote to Lady Dellaval previously to his departure from London, he promised her that the first business he attended to on his return, should be that of procuring an interview with Winstanley.

The three first days after Mr. Leuwitzer's absence were passed by Lady Dellaval in an increasing desire and anxiety to learn the truth of an affair so interesting to her feelings, and of which the developement appeared

so near at hand ; on the fourth, unable to controul the impatience of her mind, she had just come to the resolution of setting out herself for Scotland on the following day, in search of Winstanley, when Sidney Valmont in a morning visit which he paid to her, first made her acquainted with the mutual attachment which subsisted between her supposed son and Amica.

Resolved to promote by every means in her power her too long neglected son's happiness, she no sooner received this intelligence from the lips of Valmont, than she proceeded to the investigation of its truth, by requesting of Amica that interview with which we are already acquainted ; and having in the course of their conversation learnt the steady firmness of her affection to Stanton, she confided to her the suspicions which haunted her breast of her own affinity to him, and pledged to her a most solemn promise to become the friend of their attachment ; at the same time binding her to secrecy upon what had that evening passed between them ; and assuring her that she would visit her the instant of her return to town, which she intended to leave on the following morning for Scotland, in

he hope that a personal interview with Winstanley, if she were able to discover him, might reveal to her the truth of the mysterious circumstance which now occupied her thoughts.

Having pronounced on Amica a mother's blessing, she quitted her;—but she did not put in practice her first intention of setting out for Scotland on the following morning; she considered that the presence of a friend might be requisite to extort from Winstanley the confession of which she was desirous.—For this office she fixed on a Mr. Brown, a gentleman of eminence in the law, whom she admitted to her confidence, and was by particular business prevented for a few days from attending her.

At length her journey was begun:—On the morning after her departure from home, as Lady Dellaval and her companion were on the point of entering her Ladyship's carriage in order to pursue their route, the Edinburgh mail drove into the yard of the inn at which they had passed the night; their attention was attracted to the passengers, and it fell on a middle aged man who appeared to be in a weak state of health, and to require

the assistance of several persons in leaving the coach. As Lady Dellaval continued to observe him, some distant recollection of his features recurred to her memory; and a sudden turn of his countenance a few minutes after, convinced her that it was Winstanley himself whom she beheld.

It cannot be doubted that the invalid had no sooner entered the inn, than Lady Dellaval found access to his presence; she approached the chair in which he was sitting:—"Mr. Winstanley," she said, "do you not recollect me?"

For a couple of minutes he gazed upon her without appearing to recognize her countenance, a gradual recollection of it then returned to his memory. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "can it be possible that I behold Mrs. Ar——; I beg your pardon, I mean Lady ——;" he hesitated, and added, "I cannot remember your name, Madam, but I remember your person."

"We meet most opportunely," said Lady Dellaval. "I was now on my journey to the spot where I understood your abode to be;—we meet most fortunately indeed!"

A dead colour started into the cheeks of Winstanley, and he appeared violently agitated.

"I come," continued Lady Dellaval, "to ask of you an account of my son."

Winstanley clasped his hands together with emotion, and bit his lips with apparent agony.

"Almighty powers!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval, "what dreadful secret lies concealed beneath this action of despair?"

The eyes of the other passengers from the mail coach were now attracted to Lady Dellaval and Winstanley, which being observed by Mr. Brown, he stepped forward, requesting her to retire into the apartment which she had just quitted, promising to follow her to it with Winstanley.—Lady Dellaval complied with his advice, and Winstanley without the slightest reluctance accepted the offer of the arm of her Ladyship's friend; without which support he appeared unable to move; and followed her steps.

The moment he entered the apartment to which she had retired, Lady Dellaval repeated her enquiries concerning her son.

“ Spare me, Madam, spare me, if you can not forgive me,” he cried; “ the judgment of Heaven has long pursued me;—the hand of death is on me;—you cannot make me a greater wretch in this world than I already am.”

Ten thousand varying passions filled the heart of Lady Dellaval; she dreaded to hear that he whom she had so lately believed to be her son, was not so;—she dreaded lest the offspring of her love for Arlington should have been made the victim of some cruel fate. Unable to support her trembling frame, she sunk into a chair, at the same time imploring Winstanley to speak on, and to confess to her the truth.

“ It is my desire to make a confession of my past misdeeds,” he replied, “ and if possible to see the means pursued of repairing to him whom I have wronged, the injury which I have done him:—the confession which you require, it is the single desire of my heart to make to you. I have for some time past dreaded the idea of death with my conscience unburthened of its guilt; and convinced that the period of my guilty life is now fast approaching, you find me travelling into England for

the sole purpose of finding Sir Jasper, or yourself, and making to you that disclosure which can alone lessen the horrors of death."

"How providentially have we met!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval, "I will spare you; I will indeed spare you; only conceal nothing from me; and oh, say that he lives."

"God grant he may!" cried Winstanley, "it is many years since I have seen him."

"Was he christened Frederick, according to my desire?" asked Lady Dellaval.

"He was," replied Winstanley, "he was."

"Then hope flies me!" ejaculated Lady Dellaval wildly, "Maurice Stanton, cannot be my son."

"Maurice Stanton?" exclaimed Winstanley, "Maurice Stanton! have you then seen the unfortunate youth?—is he well?—is he happy!—Oh tell me he is so, and let me praise the mercy of Heaven?"

"Is it possible," said Lady Dellaval, "that Maurice Stanton can be —."

"Yes, yes," interrupted Winstanley, "Maurice Stanton is the name beneath which my wife and myself concealed the origin of Frederick Arlington."



With a faint shriek Lady Dellaval clasped her hands together in a paroxysm of joy and sunk fainting upon the back of her chair.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Hints for Parents.*

**BUT** a very few minutes elapsed ere Lady Dellaval was sufficiently composed to listen to the explanation which she saw Winstanley prepared to give her. The sum of his confession was this: He said, that from the moment of his entering into an agreement with Sir Jasper to receive the infant Arlington under his protection as the son of his wife by a former husband, the mercenary idea had struck him of appropriating to himself the sum which was to be annually remitted to him by Sir Jasper for the use of the child; to this end he had from its infancy treated his charge with undue severity; he had cloathed him coarsely, and educated him in a manner very far inferior to what it became him to have done. — That at the age of eight years, the unfortunate Frederick hav-

ing evinced some taste, and considerable partiality for music, he had persuaded him to enter himself a member of the band of the Coldstream regiment, telling him that the little his father had left him, had been expended upon his education, and that now he was past the years of childhood, he must exert his talents for procuring himself a maintenance.

“ During the life of my wife,” continued Winstanley, “ as he considered her as his mother, it was impossible for me to prevent his frequently coming to my house ; and she was resolute in performing towards him several little services, of which I was then sufficiently a villain to grudge him the enjoyment, as I regarded them as curtailments of my avaricious desires.

“ In the course of two years more my wife died, and I then informed the youth that as his mother was now no more, all his claims upon me had died with her, and that I did not wish in future to be troubled with his visits ;— from that time I have never beheld him, and that which was in justice his, has filled my purse ; but has it procured me happiness ? Oh, no, no ! the curse of Heaven has follow-

ed the betrayer of his trust :—every evil which can assail man in his passage through life, has fallen upon me ; my speculations in trade have all failed ; my property has been destroyed by fire ; my own children have all been cut off ; and I am now sinking into the grave, the victim of corroding guilt and painful disease, without one kindred hand to close my eyes, without one cheering hope, except it be, that the confession which I have now summoned resolution to make, may be instrumental in repairing to the wronged Frederick, the injustice he has received at my hands :—his forgiveness, or that of his relations, I dare not expect.”

A long silence ensued—Winstanley broke it. “ It has now for a length of time past,” he said, “ been my desire to unburthen my conscience of its guilt, but illness has pressed so heavily upon me, that until within the last few days, I have despaired of undertaking the journey into England ; and oh merciful powers, how strange a combination of circumstances that I should thus encounter you, proceeding in search of me !”

“ We part not hastily again,” said Lady Dellaval. “ I am lately come to the resolution

of taking my son home, to his mother's heart; the pride of my father, which first tore him from me, and exposed him to those miseries which you have been sufficiently unfeeling to heap upon him, shall no longer withhold me from acknowledging his birth; and you must appear to substantiate our affinity, lest the same pride should tempt my father to endeavor to disprove such evidence as I may adduce of his birth:—to assist me in obviating any such attempt on his part, is the price at which you can alone purchase the forgiveness of myself and my son, for the injustice which you have rendered him."

Winstanley appeared to seize with joy upon any means by which he might in some measure contribute towards the wiping out of that stain which was a blot upon his reputation, and a gnawing worm in his heart; and declared himself entirely at the disposal of Lady Dellaval. "You Madam," he said, "are now I perceive a greater friend to him whom I have injured than his grandfather, and it is therefore not less consistent with my plan of retribution, than with my feelings, to adhere to you."——and after a pause, he added,

“Judge it not hypocrisy in me, Madam, when I express the warmest interest in the present fate of your son ; and the most fervent anxiety for the happiness of his future life ; experience has taught me the bitterness of an unjust conduct ; and repentance converts the evil sentiments which I once harboured against him, into the most lively esteem and admiration.”

Lady Dellaval replied in as brief a manner as possible to his enquiries relative to what had been the fate of the unfortunate Frederick, since he had excluded him from his protection ; and then informing him that it was her intention that he should accompany her immediately to London, she ordered a chaise to be prepared for him ; in which, accompanied by a confidential servant of her own, he was to follow her carriage.

The whole day proved insufficient to Lady Dellaval to resolve in what manner she should make the discovery with which her own heart was labouring, to her father ; she dreaded that he would resist every appeal she could make to his feelings, and never consent to confess Frederick Arlington his grandson ; however

resolute he might behold her to acknowledge him her son: what most she dreaded was, the moment of his being acquainted that his discarded grandson was the favoured rival of his passion for Amica.

On reaching London, Lady Dellaval's friend Mr. Brown, kindly undertook to procure Winstanley a lodging, till an apt moment should present itself for her Ladyship to introduce him into the presence of her father; and Mr. Brown having escorted her into Portman Square left her for that evening.

Although Lady Dellaval experienced the greatest impatience to communicate to Amica, the discovery which she had that day made; fatigued, not less with her journey than the anxious reflections passing in her mind, she felt some refreshment absolutely necessary to her fainting spirits before she could keep her promise of visiting her immediately on her return to town, and ordered coffee to be brought to her; the servant informed her that Sir Jasper was at that time drinking some in the room below, and anxious to see him, though almos

afraid to make any attempt at sounding his feelings upon the subject uppermost in her own heart, she went to join him.

Scarcely had she taken her seat at the tea table, ere her astonishment and vexation were equally excited by the information of Amica having been discovered not to be the daughter of Lady Buckhurst:—In this intelligence had arisen another, and most formidable obstacle to her wishes; for could she even induce Sir Jasper to acknowledge Frederick Arlington as his grandson, how unlikely was it, that his proud spirit would ever suffer his grandson to unite himself with a woman whose origin was unknown, as was now the case with the unfortunate Amica.

The Baronet gave her but a few moments for reflection on this point, before he proceeded to relate the strange adventure in which he had that day himself been implicated with Amica:—The heart of Lady Dellaval sunk sickening within her whilst she listened to an account of the danger beneath which the pitiable, and innocent girl, whom she wa<sup>s</sup>



desirous of calling her child; had that day trembled; but upon the flattering wings of hope, joy arose to the relief of her feelings, when Sir Jasper declared the honorable conduct which he had pursued ;—  
“ My happiness,” he said, “ is to bestow happiness on the sex, and I have this day enjoyed a banquet by promoting the felicity of so exquisite a female as Amica.”

Lady Dellaval seized eagerly upon his words; could she prevail upon him to pursue this system a little farther in the cause of her, who owed her salvation to his honor, she might, by an innocent and honorable stratagem, ensure the eventual happiness of both Amica and her beloved son.

We have already been witnesses of her proceedings to this end; and we trust that there is no heart which will not rejoice in a mother's triumph, when she is enabled to recall to her maternal embraces the son who has by cruel destiny been exiled from the blessings of a mother's affection, and to reward his past

trials with the first of gifts which indulgent Heaven can bestow;—With the hand of an amiable, a beautiful, and a virtuous wife.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*"Foul Deeds will rise."*

NO sooner had that happy accommodation taken place which bound Sir Jasper, Amica, and Lady Dellaval, in eternal friendship, than her Ladyship insisted on removing her future daughter from Mrs. Aglen's to her own house; accordingly, after an affectionate farewell on the part of Amica to her good landlady, they departed for Portman-square.

When the agitation which had filled the breast of each, had in some measure subsided, Lady Dellaval began to speak of those who were absent. "Our joy," she said, "cannot be too soon imparted to those who are the most nearly allied to us in friendship and affection; be it therefore your business, my dearest Amica, to inform our common friend Mr. Leuwtzer, by letter, of what most immediately concerns yourself: I mean of the discovery of the error which has for some

time past subsisted of your supposed affinity to Lady Buckhurst:—I will myself address to him a confirmation of my suspicions that in his protégé Maurice Stanton I beheld my son; and of the reconciliation I have procured for him to his grandfather; but I shall entreat him not to disclose a hint of this event to Frederick; I must enjoy the luxury of making that disclosure to him myself—therefore, dear girl, if you write to him, not a word upon the subject, as you judge me worthy of your love.”

Amica promised compliance, and in her letter to Frederick Arlington, for as such we must now know him, mentioned Lady Delaval only as the kindest of friends, who had taken her under her protection since her being deprived of that of her supposed mother.

The feelings of them all now began to subside into greater tranquillity; and Sir Jasper and his daughter turned their thoughts towards the discovery of the insulter of Amica's honor, by whose villainous epistle he had been summoned to meet her in the infamous house, where he had the day before so unexpectedly appeared to her view.

Sir Jasper having received Amica as the intended wife of his grandson, consequently considered her from that instant as a part of his family; and regarded it as his indispensable duty to act strenuously towards the detection and disgrace of whoever had endeavoured to bring dishonor upon her; and declared to her his intention of immediately pursuing means to that end.

The gentle Amica, with tears starting into her eyes as she spoke, besought him to desist from his purpose; she trembled at the idea of its being known to the world that even the arts of villainy had inveigled her for an instant into a house of the nature from which he had been her protector.

"I admire the delicacy of your apprehensions," said Sir Jasper, "but trust me they are groundless;—as I was your only companion in that house, and as I permit you to marry my grandson, your innocence cannot but be manifest to every individual."

Amica turned her eyes upon Lady Dellaval, and read in her countenance a confirmation of the argument which Sir Jasper had advanced.

The suspicions of Lady Dellaval fell upon Colonel Buckhurst: Amica had slighted his advances towards her heart; and she believed him capable of resenting a disappointment which affected equally his pride and his passions, with any degree of severity.

Sir Jasper suspected Valmont, and the argument upon which he grounded his suspicion, was this; that a man of fashion and pleasure like him, must be too well acquainted with the town to have innocently mistaken ———'s hotel, for that kept by Mrs. Acton; and that the chaise which had brought them from Richmond to London, must have been previously directed by him to the former of the two houses.

"I have never consciously been the enemy of any one," said Amica. "Whoever it is that has attempted so cruelly to injure me, is doubly guilty in having planned the ruin of one, by whom no provocation had ever been given him."

In the most soothing accents, Sir Jasper endeavoured to compose her agitated spirits; indeed his conduct towards Amica was now such, that it appeared as if his disposition had undergone an entire change;—the fact

was, that his cares and pleasures had hitherto been entirely confined to himself; he was now for the first time experiencing the beneficial effects of exerting himself in the cause of another person; and enjoying the mental recompense of having performed an action upon which it gave him pleasure to reflect.

Lady Dellaval observed the change, and she could not restrain herself from exclaiming, "Oh, my dear Sir, is not the gratification which you experience in protecting this lovely and amiable girl, superior to that which you have been accustomed to reap from your attentions to her sex?"

At the first moment he answered her question only by a grave turn of his countenance, but as his eyes wandered from her to Amica, and he perceived the sunshine of joy chasing from her lovely countenance the tears which had lately bedewed it, and considered that he was the instrument of the happy change, he again directed his regards to Lady Dellaval, and relaxing into a smile, he replied, "Why, I believe it may be so; notwithstanding the exercise I have used this morning, I never felt in better spirits in my

life, and I have not even taken my nervous drops."

Amica had been left alone in the drawing room by Sir Jasper and Lady Dellaval for the purpose of writing her letter to Frederick ; and just as she had concluded it, she heard footsteps on the stairs, and voices, of which one appeared to be that of a servant who was endeavouring to prevent some visitor from ascending.—In the course of a few seconds the door of the room in which she was sitting was opened, and she beheld Sidney Valmont.

"*Ah ma belle ange!*" he exclaimed, "is it possible that I behold you here, seated in the tranquillity of happiness and ease;—and doubtless under the protection of Sir Jasper Wormeaten?"

The latter part of his sentence was spoken as a question ; and Amica too much confused by his appearance to be immediately able to collect her ideas to consider how it became her to reply, articulated merely a faltering "Yes."

"I wish you joy with all my soul," he cried, "and I must have one kiss to re—."

"Sir!" exclaimed Amica, interrupting his apostrophe, and rising from her seat, for she



perceived him advancing towards her with open arms, and a smile of libertinism on his countenance, "what is it you mean!"

"Mean, *ma chère*," he ejaculated, "why that I see you in one of the most enviable situations about town, and that if you don't grant me a kiss to thank me for having been the instrument of your obtaining it; and coax Sir Jasper into giving me his living into the bargain, you are the most ungrateful little puss ——."

Amica flew towards a door of the room which was open; but as he pronounced these words, he succeeded in catching her in his arms, and at the moment he was endeavouring to take the boon which he had requested, a shriek burst from her lips, and Lady Dellaval entered the apartment.

Immediately upon her entrance, Valmont let fall Amica's hand from his; and bowing to Lady Dellaval, whilst he wrinkled his features with a grin of self-sufficiency, he said, "Good Gad! is your Ladyship returned to town?"

Sidney Valmont, like most of Lady Dellaval's acquaintance, had been accustomed to hear from her lips, only the flippant tones of

fashion, and comments upon common-place subjects which it required neither sense to conceive, nor eloquence to discuss;—he had seen only the assumed character underneath which she attempted to forget the real sufferings of her soul; and entirely unacquainted that she possessed any other, the stern air of gravity which overspread her features caused him some slight degree of surprise, which was swelled into utter astonishment when he heard her address him with, “Pray, Mr. Valmont, in what manner can you apologize for the liberty of which I have just now seen you attempting to be guilty?”

With a countenance and tone of voice which did not either of them imply perfect composure of mind, Valmont replied, “That he had been soliciting the young lady to exert her influence with Sir Jasper, for him to be appointed to the living shortly expected to be vacant in that gentleman’s gift; and that he hoped her Ladyship would also espouse his cause.”

The eye of Lady Dellaval continued fixed upon him whilst he spoke, and when he became silent, she said, “I thought as I was approaching toward’s this apartment, that I

heard you speaking of some service for which she stood indebted to you."

Valmont's confusion increased; he attempted to smile, but the effort was difficult to accomplish, for there appeared to him so great a mystery in the countenance of Lady Dellaval, that he dreaded lest its elucidation might be of a nature unfavourable to himself.

We think it cannot have been a doubt to our readers, that by Sidney Valmont was penned the letter which invited Sir Jasper Wormeaten to meet Amica in the house of infamy to which he had deceived her, instead of conducting her to the protection of her friend Mrs. Acton; believing, that if by the joint effect of her reflections on the orphan state to which she was so unexpectedly reduced, and the pressure of present calamity and poverty, she were hurried into compliance with the Baronet's wishes, and raised to a high place in his favour, that his pretensions to the living would not be disputed when he was known to Sir Jasper to have been the instrument of his felicity.—Upon this morning accordingly, which was the one succeeding the day on which he

had penetrated his diabolical plot, he called in Portman Square to visit the Baronet, not doubting but that in the course of his visit, he should learn what had been the issue of his villainous scheme:—On arriving in Portman Square, big with hope, he insisted on seeing the Baronet, although some objections were made by the servants to admitting him; Sir Jasper having directed that they should say he was engaged, if any one asked in the course of the morning to see him:—accordingly on entering the drawing room, and finding Amica there, with the utmost composure, and complacency of mind beaming in her eye, it can scarcely want to be explained that he regarded these circumstances as a confirmation of the Baronet and herself being become *the best possible friends*; and conceived that he might now without reserve confess how far he had been conducive to their becoming so:—His address therefore to Amica was but natural in the situation in which he did not doubt her to be placed; and his subsequent vaunt of the debt which she owed him, and which was overheard by Lady Dellaval as she approached the apartment, furnishes one more instance of how

constantly the finger of Providence so directs, what appear the accidents of life, that men who possess minds sufficiently base to plan for their own private advantage the fall of the innocent, become the instruments of their own destruction.

Although not a professed pupil of Lavater, Lady Dellaval was sufficiently well acquainted with the nature of human beings to be able to read the workings of the mind in the face;—upon that of Valmont there was enough of guilt to have fully convicted him to her, had she not possessed the additional evidence of the declaration which she had heard him make, as she had advanced towards the drawing room; accordingly taking the hand of Amica, and leading her to the door, which action she accompanied by an instruction of her eye, to retire, she thus addressed him: “You have seen me, Mr. Valmont, dissipated, and it hence appears that you consider me devoid of every sentiment of delicacy and honor:—I have undoubtedly been a votary of fashion as well as yourself; but if your ideas of fashion exclude every regard to principle, I am happy to say that there are undoubtedly two classes of fashion’s worshippers, and that

I hold my place in one distinct from yourself—

“ You astonish me, my dear Madam, utterly astonish me,” replied Valmont, interrupting her address.

“ The impression is mutual,” rejoined Lady Dellaval: “ I am as much astonished at the excessive depravity of which it is now evident to me that you have been guilty, as you can be in finding that beneath the surface of flippancy and fashion which you have beheld in me, I still possess a mind of rationality and principle.”

The door opened again, and Sir Jasper entered the apartment;—the shriek which Amica had uttered, had reached him in his chamber, which was above the drawing room, and recognizing her voice, he had no sooner heard it, than he drew on his morning gown, for he was at the moment in the act of dressing, and descended to inquire into the cause with all the precipitancy he was able to use— Upon the stairs he met Amica, who had just left the drawing room at the instance of Lady Dellaval; he perceived her to be pale and trembling; he inquired the reason of

her agitation, and Amica rather surprized into an explicit reply, than intending to give one, repeated to him the expressions which Valmont had used.

"Said he so," exclaimed the Baronet. "It is plain then who has been your insulter; and he shall quickly learn what is the happiness which I conceive that women ought to enjoy; and what the contempt which those deserve who would deprive them of it."

Uncertain whether to claim the Baronet as friend or foe, Valmont renewed his bows and forced smiles at his entrance.

"I think, Sir," said Sir Jasper, "the last time I saw you, you petitioned me to place you in a living which is daily expected to be in my gift."

Still undecided what to expect, Valmont bowed again, almost to the ground, and returned a reply in the affirmative.

"And pray, Sir," returned Sir Jasper, "give me leave to ask what part of my conduct had authorized you to suppose, that an act of the meanest depravity, like the one of which I know you to have been guilty, would ren-

der you in my estimation, worthy of possessing it?"

Upon this question Valmont decidedly perceived that he had been mistaken in his ideas of the Baronet's character; and assuming the tone of an injured man, he exclaimed, "what act of depravity is it, Sir, that you dare lay to my charge? I demand an explanation of your words."

"You shall have it," replied Sir Jasper, "although I am perfectly aware that it is a needless recapitulation, in as brief a manner as possible." He then gave it, and added, "the request contained in your dark epistle was complied with;—I *have* taken the friendless Amica under my wing; and that she may not hereafter ever again be in want of a natural protector, I shall give her my grandson for a husband."

"Your concerns, Sir, can be nothing to me," replied Valmont petulantly, "but I recommend you, as a gentleman, to retract what you have said of me before I leave this house, or I shall be compelled to call upon you to prove your words."



“ When you please, Sir,” returned Sir Jasper.

“ Remember, Sir, that a single assertion is of little effect in law ; and you will find it difficult to produce any witnesses, I am certain, of what you are so bold as to advance,” cried Valmont.

“ I have *one*,” returned Sir Jasper, “ in my Amica, whose voice yesterday produced such an effect on me, that I think I could trust to it for moving every court in the kingdom to her cause.”

Biting his lips with rage, and snatching his hat from the table as he spoke, Valmont said, “ You shall hear from me, Sir, you may depend upon it, *ou le diable m'emporte*.”

“ That is a contingency which I think by no means unlikely to happen,” said Sir Jasper calmly.

Valmont had already reached the door of the apartment, but turning hastily round, he exclaimed, “ What’s that you say, Sir?”

“ I say, Sir,” returned the Baronet, “ that I think it by no means an improbable thing that a man who professes to be a minister of religion, and endeavors to procure himself a

benefice by the jointly dishonorable acts of anonymous letter writing, and attempting to betray an innocent and virtuous girl into the hands of a libertine, may receive an honorary summons from that power which is an enemy to the church."

Muttering an oath between his teeth, Valmont darted out of the room, and hurrying down stairs left the house.

"Well," cried the Baronet, when the man of reverence had taken his departure, "What say you, Lady Dellaval; have not I played my part to admiration? have not I done infinitely better in treating him with contempt, than if I had shown him that I considered him of sufficient importance to merit a severer punishment for his offence?"

Lady Dellaval was too much gratified by beholding her father standing forth the steady champion of Amica, to breathe a syllable which might render him dissatisfied with any step which he had taken in her cause; but in her own heart she trembled lest Sir Jasper might have spoken his sentiments too freely upon the presumptive proofs of Valmont's guilt, of which he was alone possessed; and

she experienced a considerable degree of anxiety, lest any unpleasant consequences should arise from it.

Valmont had not been gone many minutes before dinner was announced; whilst the servants were present, the comments of the assembled party upon the transactions of the morning were restrained, and scarcely were they left at liberty by the removal of the cloth, ere Amica was informed that there was a person below, who called herself Acton, and who requested to be permitted to speak to her immediately upon particular business.

“Whatever is of importance to you, my dear Amica, is now so to us,” said Lady Dellaval; “I dare say, therefore, that my father will have no objection to your receiving her here.”

Sir Jasper desired that she might be immediately ushered in.—In the course of a few minutes she entered the dining room; her step was hurried, and a considerable degree of agitation was visible on her countenance, but it appeared the emotion of pleasure, rather than pain.—Dropping a hasty courtesy at her entrance, without fixing her eyes on any one but Amica, she advanced

towards her exclaiming, " Oh, my dear Miss Amica! I have found out who it was that took you to that wicked house—yes, thank Heaven, I am come at the truth of who it was; and here I am on purpose to tell you."

All present expressed their surprise how Mrs. Acton could have been enabled to make such a discovery; and Lady Dellaval said, " Is he a clergyman, Mrs. Acton?"

" Yes, my Lady," replied the good woman, " he is indeed, but such clergymen; as I say, my very blood boils to think of them;—but may I tell my story?"

She was desired to begin it directly, with which request she complied in the following words: " I dare say, Ma'am," addressing Amica, " you very well remember my second son George: he is now one of the post boys at the Castle at Richmond: It so happened that he this morning drove a couple of ladies to my brother's house; and when he had put up his horses he came into the bar, and he said to me, " Well, mother, I had a charming job yesterday; I got a present of two guineas of Mr. Valmont, our Richmond parson."—" Valmont!" I echoed, " Yes," he replied,

“ the parson had been up to some sly trick or another,” as he expressed it, “ for he gave me the two guineas to set him and a young woman down at a house”—(you can’t want to be told where, Ma’am)—“ upon condition that if she should ask me whether the house was Langford’s hotel, I should say, yes.”

“ This is proof positive,” said Sir Jasper in a half whisper to Lady Dellaval.

Mrs. Acton overheard him, and replying to his words said, “ Proof indeed, Sir”—I knew the minute George told me of it, who the lady must have been, and I called out, “ Why boy,” says I, “ you’ll tremble when you hear who it was you carried there;—she is safe now, thank God! but I hope the peril she has been in will be a lesson to you, how you ever become a cat’s paw again to gentlemen in their wicked doings! That young woman, as you call her, was no other than that dear young lady, that your father’s best friend Mr. Leuwitzer brought up as his own daughter, and entrusted to me for the first dozen years of her life! —Oh, if you had seen how George looked.—“ Was it?” he cried, “ Was it? but is she indeed safe?”—I assured him

you were so.—“Heaven be praised,” he cried, “if she had not, I should never have known another happy minute!”—“And can you be happy now, said I, with the money that was given you for such a wicked purpose in your pocket; or be content to keep it there?—If you don’t go to person Valmont, the minute you get back to Richmond, and return him his dirty gold, I never desire to see you step over the threshold of the house I live in again.”

“And what said George?” inquired Sir Jasper.

“Oh, Sir,” replied Mrs. Acton, “George is a good lad, though I am his mother that say so of him—and he’ll not be five minutes in Richmond, depend upon it, without following my advice.”

“This is very fortunate,” said Lady Delaval. “Valmont will now find that we have more than presumptive proof of his guilt; and I shall not be surprised if a journey to his native Welch mountains be the result of his making the discovery; for the most vicious know how detrimental to their easy passage through life is the loss of that reputation

which they value only on account of its utility to them in their intercourse with society."

"I ever considered him as a votary of fashion and folly, but never supposed that he could have been guilty of such meditated profligacy," remarked Amica.

"It is not unlikely that he thought thus of himself," replied Lady Dellaval, "till circumstances conspired to tempt him to it: a devotion to the shrine of fashion is the most dangerous ascendancy which can assail the mind of youth; a full purse, and a strong mind are frequently insufficient to prevent it from engendering vicious habits; and with neither of these defences for its guard, it is almost certain to descend into immorality. Fashion truly denominated is vanity; and it is vanity which leads young men like Sidney Valmont to despise the pursuance of a lucrative trade, and select for themselves a profession which will scarcely find them bread; and upon which they determine to live like men of fashion without the means of mechanics; and amidst the innumerable instances which we are daily witnessing of such fashionable folly, we cannot be surprised if single individuals present

themselves to our observation, who are hurried into sacrificing their morals to those false ideas of consequence which they have made the regulators of their thoughts and actions."



## CHAPTER XV.

*“ Joy’s extatic Trial.”*

AT length the time arrived at which Amica received intelligence from Mr. Leuwitzer that he should embark in the next packet from Cuxhaven ; and on the receipt of this letter, Lady Dellaval, whose eagerness to declare herself to her son was uncontrollable resolved that Amica and herself should meet the travellers at Harwich ;—Sir Jasper debated on the possibility of his attending them, but the gout had again usurped dominion over his feet ; and it was unanimously decided that he could not undertake the journey without material inconvenience and pain to himself.

Sir Jasper was one of those men who go through with whatever they undertake ; it

therefore really was in his inclination, had it been in his ability to have been one of those who welcomed Mr. Leuwitzer and young Arlington on shore; and as he could not go in person to enjoy their thanks and admiration of his disinterested conduct, he was obliged to console himself with imagining how much opportunity for expatiating on his excellence, his absence would afford them—Indeed the Baronet was now almost come to the conviction of there being a very considerable degree of happiness to be enjoyed by living in the bosom of a family from whom he received those anxious attentions by which Lady Dellaval and Amica displayed to him their gratitude for his late conduct, in that instance where the felicity of them both had so materially depended upon his decision; and he now believed that he only wanted to prove Amica of respectable birth, to be without a wish; for it is not every mind which can persuade itself to regard an individual, merely for the simple worth of that individual's heart, without admitting into the scale the adventitious circumstances of birth and fortune.

On reaching Harwich, Lady Dellaval and her fair *protégée* learnt that the passengers from the Cuxhaven packet had been landed nearly an hour, and Amica instantly hastened on the wings of affection to the apartment which contained her beloved friend Adelaide and her revered protector Mr. Leuwitzer—Their joy at meeting was as great as it was reciprocal. “Oh my dear girl!” exclaimed Mrs. Weimar, folding Amica to her breast, “how grateful is it at this moment to my feelings, to be welcomed to my beloved England, by an affectionate friend like yourself!”

Mr. Leuwitzer claimed the next embrace, and as he received her to his arms, he said, “You are now, my dear child, once more entirely mine; I believe I was never reckoned a very selfish man, but certainly either on your account, or my own, I cannot help feeling very well satisfied that all connexion between yourself and that strange family, is at an end.” He next turned to Lady Dellaval, whose eyes were fixed in sparkling joy upon her beloved, her long lost son, and drawing her aside, he said, “What do I not owe to you and Sir Jasper, for

the kindness you have during my absence shewn to my dear Amica?"

"I am still your debtor," replied Lady Dellaval. "What do I not owe to your humanity and benevolence for having been the guardian, the father of my son's friendless state?—You have not imparted to him," she added, "that I am his mother?"

"I have complied with your request of secrecy," he answered: "He merely knows that he *has* a mother in existence, and that a short time will disclose her to him."

"He has been too long deserted by her already," replied Lady Dellaval; "and every minute that I now keep him in ignorance of his birth, I am adding to the injustice of my past conduct;—but I cannot disclose myself to him before these strangers," casting her eyes as she spoke upon Mrs. Weimar and Lord Abberville. "I will retire into another room; have the goodness to direct him to follow me."

Frederick Arlington received his instructions from Mr. Lenwitzer, and found Lady Dellaval in a private apartment of the inn, anxiously awaiting his coming;—at her invitation he placed himself on a chair next

to her's, and she then said, "you have been already informed that you have a mother in existence?"

Frederick replied in the affirmative.

"I am deputed by your mother," Lady Dellaval continued, "to give you a short sketch of those circumstances of her life, which compelled her to desert the child of her affections."—She paused an instant, and having then detailed to him a brief history of herself, she said, "what are now your sentiments with regard to your mother? do you pity her for the perversity of her fate? or does her neglect of yourself cause you to view her idea with the eye of coldness?"

"Oh no, no, no," replied Frederick, "I venerate her for the love which she bore my father—I adore her for the affection which she expresses for myself. You say she has it in her power to bestow affluence on me; that I value not; it is the treasure of a mother's affection that I covet: Oh could I now behold her! in the joy of a mother's embrace, every other consideration would be forgotten; I would say, 'Oh my mother, give me the only inheritance I ask! give me your affection, take me to your heart!'"

“ Behold it ready to receive you,” exclaimed Lady Dellaval. “ Frederick! Frederick! I am your mother.”

The succeeding minutes were given to the incoherence of joy, and can be better delineated by the feelings of the heart than by the traces of the pen.

When a tolerable degree of composure returned to the feeling of Lady Dellaval, she said, “ Oh my son, what do I not owe to your existence? the anticipation of this blissful moment has reclaimed me from a life of folly, and irregularity—a life of dissipation, from which the mind of every well educated being ought to revolt.”

“ But recollect, dearest madam,” said Frederick, “ that the life you have passed since your separation from my father, was not the effect of your choice, but the resource of your sorrowing heart.”

“ Would that my voice,” returned Lady Dellaval, “ could convince other unfortunates, who may be inclined to pursue my steps, how ineffectual a remedy for care is dissipation; and that the only balm for a wounded mind, is the pursuance of such a conduct as leaves it no quarrel with itself

—the vanities of fashion are followed at the price of many a heart ache; and at the moment of reflection, the pangs which a life of pleasure communicates to the heart, only adds gall to that bitterness which it is vainly intended to sweeten.—But this is an hour upon which gloomy ideas have no business to intrude; my future conduct shall afford you the example of my changed opinions; but we are not going to become the inhabitants of a cottage neither, Frederick; although you asked only my affection, I must inforce upon your moderation the inheritance of my father, Sir Jasper;—and that your wife may not be dowerless, I make her the heir of what I am myself possessed of” ——

“ My wife?” exclaimed Frederick. “ Are you then acquainted with my attachment to my Amica, or have you destined my hand to any other?”

“ Did I not tell you in my narrative,” she rejoined, “ that I had resolved by every means in my power to promote the happiness of my son? and do I not know by sad experience, how defective is any kind of happiness which does not include the union

of congenial hearts?"—The tear trembled in her eye as she spoke. "It is twenty-three years since"—her tones became inarticulate, and she hung weeping on the neck of her son:—In a few moments she recovered her utterance sufficiently to pronounce, "In you I still behold him; you are his image, as you are his son; and whilst I hold you to my heart, all my past sufferings are requited."

When Lady Dellaval and her son returned to the party whom they had quitted for the purpose of the interesting communication just recounted, the evening was already far advanced, and it was therefore resolved that they should enjoy a night's repose in their present habitation, and commence their journey to London after breakfast on the following morning:—The countenances of all wore a smile of the most heartfelt satisfaction; except those of the gentle Adelaide and Lord Abberville; on that of the former was depicted a mild melancholy; and on that of the latter, an anxious depression of spirits, which afforded lessons of gratitude to the more favored of fortune's children,



for the benefits they were enjoying at her hands.

Lady Dellaval insisted that the day of their arrival in London should be passed by them all at her house;—to Mr. Leuwitzer and his sister, she felt herself as it were already related, by the great act of kindness which they had conferred on her son and his beloved Amica:—Lord Abberville was the only nominal stranger; and his being the friend of Mr. Leuwitzer would alone have been a sufficient passport for him to the civilities of her Ladyship, had she not been too well acquainted with his name, his rank, and the story of his misfortunes, not to have felt a considerable degree of respect for him on his own account.

The reception which our young friends met with from Sir Jasper, was of the most flattering and gratifying nature:—In his present condescending conduct, Amica entirely forgot the character in which he had once attempted to approach her heart; and Frederick endeavoured to banish from his mind that severity under which his father had smarted.—Lord Abberville found in the Baronet an acquaintance of former days; and

the attentions which he received from the circle of friends amongst whom chance had thrown him, so far won upon his feelings as to tempt him into a communication of the mysterious summons which had once more induced him to visit England; but his strength, and spirits being alike considerably exhausted by his late voyage, he yielded to their persuasions not to quit Portman square that evening, but to defer his inquiries into Ryecroft's advertisement until the following morning.

Frederick Arlington alone absented himself from the party assembled at his mother's; immediately upon reaching London, he learnt that in the course of the last two days Winstanley had sent to Lady Dellaval's repeated messages, saying that the hour of his death was fast approaching, and requesting that if Mr. Arlington were arrived, he would condescend to favor him for a few moments with his presence; which act could alone enable him to die with the hope of future pardon.

No sooner was this intelligence communicated to Frederick, than the natural humanity of his heart led him to visit the peni-

tent man. — On his reaching the house where Winstanley lodged, he was again informed of the eagerness of the dying man to behold him, as likewise of the very short time it appeared likely that he had to remain upon earth; on entering his chamber he found him supported on his bed by pillows; and languid as all his faculties were rendered by the approach of death, it was instantly evident that he retained a recollection of Frederick's person, for on beholding him he attempted to hide his face, at the same time exclaiming, "Oh Heavens! oh God! this is too much."

"What do you fear?" asked Frederick, approaching towards the bed.

"That you never can forgive me," he replied; "no it is impossible you should;— and I must therefore die, condemned to the pangs of eternal torture."

"Nay, nay, you know me not," replied Arlington. "The wrongs I have suffered at your hands are great; but they have not hardened me into a disregard of the Christian duties."

"You have suffered nothing from my treatment of you," shrieked forth Winstan-

ley, "equal to the torments I have endured from reflection on my conduct—may you never know what it is to die of a heart broken by the consciousness of crime!" The dew of death poured down his cheeks as he spoke, the film of darkness was gathering upon his eyes, his lips trembled with cold shiverings, and Arlington believing the penitent to be near his end, said, "May you find Heaven as merciful to your sins, and as ready to accept your repentance as my heart is—Winstanley, I do most truly forgive you."

A convulsive sigh of thankfulness burst from his lips, but he appeared unable, from the violence of his feelings to articulate his thanks; he raised his hands towards Heaven as he fixed his eyes on Frederick; and his features bespoke him to be offering up a prayer of gratitude for his humanity.—After this effort, he sunk exhausted upon his bed, and Frederick judging that his existence was now so near its close, that his presence could not afford him any farther comfort, repeated to him his forgiveness and departed.

In the course of the night Winstanley breathed his last; but ere the fading embers of existence were entirely extinguished, he

recovered his utterance, and his strength sufficiently to request to be once more raised upon his pillows; and when placed upon them he again prayed with the utmost fervency for the future happiness of Frederick Arlington.—Having concluded his prayer, he addressed those who were standing around his bed in these words, “Hear and believe that the most persecuted of human beings, who owes his wrongs to an unjust man, tastes the bliss of Paradise in his earthly sufferings, when compared with the feelings of him who inflicts his misery on him.”

He spoke no more; and a few minutes after he had uttered this sentence, his spirit fled to its account in a future state.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Retribution.*

ON the following morning during the breakfast hour at Lady Dellaval's, her Ladyship, and her guests were not a little surprised by the entrance of one of her servants with the following message: "Sir Benjamin and Lady Buckhurst's compliments, and request to know how Mr. Leuwitzer and Mr. Arlington do after their voyage; they also hope that Lady Dellaval and Miss Amica are perfectly well; and will do themselves the pleasure of calling to congratulate her Ladyship on the late happy event in her family, as soon as they find it is agreeable to her to receive company."

"What hypocrisy!" exclaimed Frederick, addressing Amica. "This from beings who turned you into the street, although till within an hour of their inhumanity they

had believed you to be the daughter of one of them!"

"And Sir Benjamin to include his name in an enquiry of friendship after Mr. Leuwitzer, when he threatened to call him to an account for his charity to the unfortunate Le Blancs!" cried Amica.

"I think this message almost an insult," said Mr. Leuwitzer; they must suppose us deprived of common sense to receive it as a compliment."

"Permit me to answer it," replied Lady Dellaval, "and they shall find we are not—their motives are evident to me, and I will explain them to you when I have done;—for fear of a mistake I will write my message on a card."—Her Ladyship moved to her writing table, and in a few minutes dispatched, with the approbation of all present, the following reply: "Lady Dellaval, &c. are happy to say that they are as well as it is possible for Sir Benjamin and Lady Buckhurst to wish them, and will not fail *to let them know* when it is agreeable for them to receive their intended visit."

"Do you not perceive," said her Ladyship, when the servant had quitted the room,

“ that in the meanness of which they are **at** this moment guilty, in endeavouring to conciliate matters with us, they are grasping at the last straw which presents itself to them to catch at, in their actual state of sinking consequence.—They are no doubt in a most uncomfortable strait; her Ladyship must be conscious that no persons of respectability will associate with the acknowledged mother of Mrs. Flap; the least objectionable part of whose history is her late avocation as a milliner: Sir Benjamin cannot doubt that his want of feeling towards a young woman who will shortly appear to the world as the granddaughter of Sir Jasper, cannot but fix an indelible stain on him:—for the first of these misfortunes they have no remedy; in case of the second they have the single one of trying the efficacy of licking the dust before the feet of Amica’s immediate connexions; a reconciliation with whom can alone restore them to any degree of endurance in society; and as we do not humour the plan, they must, content or not, retire to their native insignificance; and instead of employing their thoughts in future upon high life and parliamentary honors, to which their minds



**are** utterly inadequate, employ their days in **acquiring** a little stock of that common sense, **of** which if they had set out in life possessed, **they** would have found it a talisman against **the** mortifications they are now suffering **under.**"

Some of our readers are perhaps desirous of being informed what occurrences have taken place in the house of Sir Benjamin Buckhurst since the expulsion of Amica from it; and we think it highly becoming that a brief account to this effect should be given them, but they must accept a brief one, as we are uncertain how a diffuse description of the affairs and transactions of this family would please all our readers, now they have concluded that part for which they were introduced into our narrative, and are no longer of importance to its progress.— Suffice it therefore to say, that Mrs. O'Rourke, by means of that efficacious instrument, the law, satisfactorily proved and enforced the birth and rights of Mrs. Block; in consequence of which Sir Benjamin was compelled to put her into the possession of the solid sum of twenty thousand pounds; with one part of which her debts were paid to liberate Block from

prison, and with the remainder he dashingl<sup>y</sup> resolved to cut his employers, who had refused his drafts, and set up in trade for himself; for which purpose he returned to Worthing with his wife; taking with them Mrs. O'Rourke, out of friendship to her for the service she had ultimately rendered him, after all the rogueries which she had practised upon him at the beginning of their acquaintance.

Thus Block settled his business tolerably well with Sir Benjamin, and his delectable rib's mother; but there still remained a little account to settle between him and the Colonel.—The Colonel urged that as it was now *all in the family*, Block could not but hush up the *error* of which he had been guilty; but Block insisted that there was no hushing up without *hush-money*; and the Colonel, like many more human beings, knowing the value of the appearance of character, though he cared not a rush for the reality, was compelled for self security to pay the debt, and to throw Jarvis in a cool thousand, as a sugared cake to tame the lion which he could not overcome; ultimately constrained by the effect of the chances to buy the forbearance

of the man whom he had destined to be his dupe and his prey.

When the breakfast table at Lady Dellaval's broke up, Mr. Leuwitzer having seen his sister and her children depart for Richmond, set out with Lord Abberville for the chambers of Mr. Elwes, in Chancery-lane, to whom Ryecroft's advertisement had directed application to be made.

They found Mr. Elwes at home; and having introduced themselves to him, they inquired of him whether he was able to give them any explanation of the advertisement which had occasioned their visit to him.— He replied, "That he knew but little of the parties at whose request he had inserted it, and that what he knew he would immediately inform them of." He said, "that one evening about a month ago, a person called at his house, who told him he was one of the jailers from the ——— prison, and that he was sent to him by a couple of the prisoners, who wished to engage his services in their favor; and who had sent him three guineas in advance towards his charges, and requested to see him immediately."

“ I could not do otherwise,” continued Mr. Elwes, “ than obey the summons; I accordingly accompanied the messenger, and on reaching the —— prison, I found my clients to be an elderly man and a young one; they bore the appearance of decayed gentlemen; they had, they said, been reduced by various misfortunes to assume names which were not their own, the elder that of Effingham, and the younger, that of Fairfax; by which names they had been committed to prison; Fairfax on the suspicion of having robbed a lady of a diamond sprig; Effingham on the accusation of having offered it for sale—they confessed that they had little to advance concerning this affair, in their own defence; but added, “ that the business upon which they wished to consult me, was the possibility of discovering a gentleman named Lord Abberville, who had for many years devoted himself to the most obscure retirement, and whom, if they could discover, they did not doubt that it would be in their power to win over to their cause; and that they believed him possessed of the means of procuring

**their** pardon.”—They then informed me that **their** real names were Ryecroft; and gave **me** for insertion in the public prints, that **advertisement** which has already met your **eye**—more explicit they have not been with **me**; and they are at this moment in the utmost anxiety lest you should not appear, as **three** days only are now wanting to their trial.”

Pray, Sir,” asked Mr. Leuwitzer, “do you know the name of the lady to whom the diamond sprig belonged, for the unjust possession of which these men stand committed?”

“The lady,” replied Mr. Elwes, “is the daughter-in-law of Sir Benjamin Buckhurst.”

“I thought so,” returned Mr. Leuwitzer; “I thought it must be my Amica,” he added, addressing Lord Abberville, “I could not immediately resolve that the names of the offenders which she mentioned to me in a letter which I received from her whilst in Hamburgh, giving me an account of her entertaining some hope of recovering her property, were Effingham and Fairfax; but I thought they must be the same the moment this gentleman repeated them.”

"Do you know the lady, Sir," asked Mr. Elwes.

"Most intimately indeed, Sir," returned Mr. Leuwitzer, "and since the arrest of these men, circumstances have occurred which will prevent Sir Benjamin from taking any further interest in this affair; and which will entirely place their fate in my hands."

"This is a strange, most complicated affair!" said Lord Abberville; "let us proceed to the prison without delay, and gain an explanation of the torturing mystery."

A quarter of an hour's walk brought them to it. Being arrived there, Mr. Elwes requested his Lordship's permission to go and announce him to his clients; in a few minutes he returned, saying, that Ryecroft had appeared violently agitated on learning that he was about to behold his Lordship; but that he had in a great measure composed his feelings, and was now prepared to see him.

For the first minute after Lord Abberville's entrance into the cell, to which Mr. Elwes had led the way, a general silence prevailed; whilst on the countenances of each were

**d**epicted emotions of mind natural to the peculiarity of the circumstances under which they met:—During this short interval, Mr. Leuwitzer turned his eyes upon the culprits, and was surprised to find that the countenances of both were familiar to his recollection; he looked a second time, and memory coming to his aid, he recognised in the younger, the person who under the name of Reuben Davids, had attempted to swindle him out of the five hundred pound bank note; and in the elder, the Mr. Robertson, who had succeeded in fraudulently obtaining it at his hands.

Ryecroft was too much occupied with his own thoughts, and Lord Abberville, to dedicate any portion of his ideas to Mr. Leuwitzer.—Lord Abberville spoke first, demanding an explanation of the advertisement which had brought him to the prison.

“My Lord,” replied Ryecroft, “I have throughout my life been your most determined enemy, and as such I know that I have little kindness to expect at your hands; but I am also acquainted with the excellence of your disposition; too noble to harbour revenge; and upon this knowledge I trust

that you will not refuse a mutual exchange of service, which fate at this moment places it in our power to perform for each other."

Ryecroft paused—Lord Abberville said, "You undoubtedly awaken my curiosity, proceed in your explanation."

"This young man," continued Ryecroft, "is my son Edward, whom you have not seen since he was a boy; unfortunate has it been for him, that chance made him the son of a father like myself; he stands accused of theft—my confession to you shall be open, for I repeat that I am too well acquainted with the generosity of your nature to fear that you should injure either him or me, if you will not serve us—for many years past we have both been reduced to circumstances of the greatest necessity, our means of life always precarious, sometimes dishonourable. —About two months ago he contrived to introduce himself as a livery servant at the masquerade of a Lady Dellaval, where he possessed himself with a diamond sprig, which was that evening worn by a lady whom he conducted to her carriage—Some days after I offered it for sale; it was recognized, and we were both thrown into



**P**ri~~son~~—Save us, my Lord, from the punishment which is impending over our crime; for it is *in your power* to do it; and I will in return disclose to you a secret of the utmost importance to your happiness."

Lord Abberville would have spoken, but Ryecroft prevented him by proceeding thus—  
"You cannot, my Lord, have forgotten my attachment to Georgina Howard?"—At the sound of this name, Lord Abberville turned deadly pale, and sunk down upon a bench near which he was standing. "Do not consider it wanton cruelty," continued Ryecroft, "that I recall to your memory one whose recollection excites painful sensations in your breast; it is a necessary part of my explanation,—from the period at which you interrupted my progress towards her heart, my rage was inflamed against you; when you became her husband, that rage grew into the most determined hatred; the sting of disappointment acting upon a naturally dissipated temper, led me into the pursuit of every idle extravagance, and in a very short time reduced me to the necessity of flying from my creditors, and concealing myself in London under various disguises.—One evening about this time, as I was passing

through St. James's street, I observed a house on fire, and immediately ran towards it, in the hope of the tumult producing me some advantage; for my necessities had, I own, already banished from my mind those scruples which all men at some period of their lives entertain about enriching themselves at the expence of others: I found no impediment to my entering the house, and accordingly ran up stairs; the back rooms were already in a blaze; in the front chamber upon the second floor I heard the cries of an infant; urged by the idea of the reward which would be bestowed on its preserver, I snatched it from its cradle, in which it would in a few seconds more have been reduced to a cinder by the spreading fire, and I ran with it into the street.—I perceived no one ready to claim it, and therefore I proceeded with it to my own lodgings, where I intended to keep it till I could learn from whom I was to demand my reward for preserving its life;—Early on the following morning I learnt that the only infant in the house was the child of *Lord Abberville*; and that it was supposed to have perished in the flames:—Now then I had in my power revenge on Lord Abberville for the

disappointment which he had occasioned me; by concealing from him the existence of his daughter; and I resolved to enjoy it."

"Oh cruel! inhuman man!" exclaimed Lord Abberville; "and couldst thou hope for prosperity after this! but oh tell me—yet I tremble;—I dread to ask—does that daughter still live?"

"She does," replied Ryecroft.

"Heaven is still merciful!" exclaimed Lord Abberville, clasping his hands together with the wildest emotion of joy. "Oh let me once more clasp her to my breast," he added, "and name the terms of your indulgence."

"Only promise that you will save me and my son from ignominious punishment," replied Ryecroft.

"I would promise with joy and alacrity," answered Lord Abberville, "but that I am doubtful of possessing the power of fulfilling my promise."

"The power is yours, by Heaven!" exclaimed Ryecroft."

"I give my promise then," returned Lord Abberville, "now tell me where I may find my child."

"It was she," replied Ryecroft, "from whom my son purloined that very diamond sprig for which we are detained prisoners:— You now perceive that I did not deceive you when I solemnly affirmed that it would be in your power to rescue us from punishment."

"Oh Heaven!" exclaimed Lord Abberville, "have I then already beheld with admiration the child of my last, my beloved Georgina, insensible that the treasure was my own! oh bliss unequalled! unexpected!"

"Merciful Providence! cried Mr. Leuwtizer, "is it possible that it is my Amica who ——"

At the sound of these words Ryecroft for the first time fixed his eyes upon Mr. Leuwtizer; as he met his countenance he started, as if impressed by some sudden recollection, and turning hastily towards his son, appeared to read in his features a confirmation of his own ideas; for again fixing his eyes upon Mr. Leuwtizer, he exclaimed, "Great God! is it possible that the direction of fate should

have brought you hither at this critical moment!—then little avails us the pardon of Lord Abberville!”

“ I have already recognised you both,” replied Mr. Leuwitzer, “ but fear me not; as your present conduct bespeaks you already in some measure inclined, by the little success which has attended your villanies, to repentance; I will not be the means of impeding by my severity, as *you* would probably call it, but which the *law* of your country would truly denominate justice, your progress towards a more perfect reform; to which it is impossible you should have a stronger inducement than the lenity of those to whom you confess yourselves amenable; and whose example should inspire you with a desire of attaining to the happiness of ultimately possessing those superior feelings which animate their hearts.”

Both Ryecroft and his son appeared fervently impressed with gratitude to Mr. Leuwitzer for his lenity; and having expressed to him their feelings, Ryecroft said, “ You were doubtless informed by your servant that at the time of my visiting your house at

Richmond, I made some inquiries of him respecting the young lady under your protection?"

"I was," returned Mr. Leuwitzer; "I also judged that you were actuated by a more than common curiosity in your examination of the sword which you saw suspended over my chimney piece:—In return for the kindness with which you have been treated by Lord Abberville and myself, you cannot, consistently with the gratitude which you profess yourself to feel towards us, withhold from our knowledge any circumstance with which you are acquainted, that it can give us satisfaction to hear—pray inform us what you at that time knew, either of the young lady under my protection or of the sword."

"It is my intention to be explicit with you," replied Ryecroft; "I should become more criminal than I already am were I to attempt any concealment.—The moment that I entered your apartment the sword struck me as bearing a very strong resemblance to one which I purloined from the house in which I rescued Lord Abberville's daughter from the flames; whilst you retired for a few moments into an adjoining apartment, I took

a nearer view of it, and was convinced it was the same: this conviction tempted me, at departing, to enquire of your servant whether there were not some story connected with that sword?—his answer was in the affirmative. “His master,” he said, “hoped one day by means of that sword to discover the birth of a young lady who had in a very strange manner been thrown upon his protection.”—This young lady I was assured could be no other than the daughter of Lord Abberville; and lost to feeling as you may believe me to have been, I still felt happy in knowing her to be thus fortunately situated.”

“Can it then be,” exclaimed Mr. Leuwitzer, “that you are one of the persons who inhabited a chamber in St. Giles’s into which that very young lady, who has from that period been considered by me as my own daughter, then an infant, invited me by a tale of the wretched situation of her mother and sister?”

“It is as you conjecture,” replied Ryecroft, “at the moment of your entrance, I was stationed with no very honorable design behind the bed in which lay the woman and child; by the sudden manner in which you

left the chamber I was conscious that **you** had caught a glimpse of my person; and dreading from the manner of your departure, lest it should be your intention to return and search the apartment, no sooner were **you** gone than we retired to an opposite house, leaving alone in the chamber we had quitted, the child, at whose persuasion you had entered it; apprehending that she might, at at some future time, be recognised by you, and lead to our detection and punishment:— From a window in the opposite house we saw you, as we had anticipated, return; and at your departure we perceived that you carried away the child with you.—We resolved no more to inhabit the apartment we had just quitted, but we visited it in order to remove a box which we had left in it, and which contained the very sword in question, and some other trinkets of little value, except that they were the identifiers of another child of which my nominal wife and myself were at that time in possession.”

“ Your nominal wife,” said Mr. Leu- witzer, “ passed for a gypsey, and was an Irish woman, her name Norah O’Rouke— is it not so ?”



Ryecroft appeared surprised to find Mr. Leuwitzer so well acquainted with some parts of his history; but he made only a momentary pause, and then continued thus: "Such indeed she was;—after I had experienced that fall in society to which I was reduced by the effects of excessive dissipation, I have already told you that my means of subsistence were of the most precarious kind; and in order the better to conceal myself from those who had known me in my days of prosperity and extravagance, I assumed the name of Preston."

"Such the Bow-street officers who accompanied me to the chamber into which the child had an hour before invited me, told me they believed to be the name of the man who inhabited it," said Mr. Leuwitzer.

"By this name only Norah knew me," continued Ryecroft; "the greatest accident introduced her to my acquaintance, and she made so strong an impression on my heart that I immediately took her to live with me: We had not been a month together before I rescued Lord Abberville's child from death, and took it home with me to our abode.—I had now two children to maintain besides my

own son, for previously to the commencement of my acquaintance with Norah, she had stolen a child to excite the compassion of the benevolent in the character of a begging gypsy, from a lady in Devonshire, of the name of Dimick; to which she was become attached, and had made it one of the conditions of her engaging to live with me, that I should suffer her to retain the child under her protection."

"And to this child," said Mr. Leuwitzer, "belonged the spoon, the thimble, and the tooth-pick case, which I found in the shagreen case, in the same box which contained the sword; and which have led to many disagreeable errors; but thank God a proper elucidation has at last taken place."

Ryecroft proceeded to say; "That Norah had treated both the children with the greatest humanity and tenderness, instructing them in return to be useful to her in asking charity; that about six years after Mr. Leuwitzer had taken away from the chamber in St. Giles's, Georgina, as we must now call her, he had become tired of his mistress and deserted her; from which time he knew not what had been her fate."

Here the account of Norah's death, which had been communicated by her sister Kathleen to Lady Buckhurst, and which she had repeated to Georgina, enabled Mr. Leuwitzer in turn to become the informer of Ryecroft; who then proceeded to speak thus: "I will not offend your senses by calling upon you to listen to an account of the scenes and stratagems which it must be offensive to you to hear; suffice it therefore to say, that at the time of your finding the five hundred pound Bank note, my son and I happened to be together in London; for we had of late years frequently separated in pursuit of different plans and attempts; and seeing your advertisement we resolved that he should first visit you; and if he could obtain a sight of the note, endeavour to bring away in his memory the number and signatures, in order that I might thus be enabled to claim it upon the terms which you had named.—How our plan succeeded you are already too well acquainted."

"You have nothing more to say, I imagine," replied Mr. Leuwitzer, "which it is of importance to Lord Abberville or myself to listen to."

“ Grant me your patience one minute longer,” returned Ryecroft. “ I have already told you that my son contrived to gain admittance to the masquerade of a Lady Dellaval; I have already told you of the transaction which occurred there, and of its consequence; but I have yet to add, that unprincipled as my conduct through life has been, I should not have ventured to implore the assistance of Lord Abberville in my present misfortune, after the wrongs I have been guilty of towards him, had I not on the day that Edward and myself were brought to this prison, learnt from one of our fellow captives, who had been a servant in the family of Sir Benjamin Buckhurst, a sketch of the history of the young lady who was at that time supposed by Lady Buckhurst to be her daughter: I immediately perceived the error into which circumstances had led her, and convinced that she must be the child of Lord Abberville, and not the daughter of Lady Buckhurst, I resolved to enter upon the experiment of discovering his Lordship’s retreat, and trusting to the benevolence of his feelings for shewing mercy to me and my son, in return for the

service I now had it in my power to perform towards him."

Here ended Ryecroft's confession: and Lord Abberville being not less impatient to quit his presence than to clasp his daughter to his breast, Mr. Leuwitzer and he immediately left the prison together; the former promising Ryecroft that he should see him again on the following day; when in addition to his liberation from prison, it was his intention to place him and his son in some situation where they might, by means of their own industry, provide in a creditable manner for the remainder of their lives. "I do not," he added, "make this promise so much out of consideration to you, as of society at large, which would have a just quarrel against me if I were to cast upon it two human beings, whose necessities might drive them to continue unworthy members of it, when by a little attention on my part to their wants, they may be reclaimed."

As they proceeded towards Portman-square Lord Abberville said, "How unexpectedly am I restored to happiness, and to the enjoyment of a father's extacy!—All this I owe to

you, at whose friendly persuasion I once more entered England."

"I was but made the instrument of your return to the felicity," replied Mr. Leuwitzer; "you were guided to it through my means by the hand of Providence, which sooner or later stretches itself out to requite the sufferings of those who have borne their calamities with a firm reliance on the wisdom of that power by which they were inflicted.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*The Curtain Drops.*

THE characters of a novel like those of a drama, cannot too soon make their respective bows and courtesies, when the catastrophe of the piece has been produced.—We trust therefore that our readers, *greatly as we hope* they have been interested in the fate of our heroine, will consider with us that nothing could be added to the interest by a detail of her first knowledge of her father; scenes of this nature produce the most affecting sensations upon the heart in real life, but in description they lose their power.—We have therefore only to remark, that different indeed were the feelings with which she heard Lord Abberville hail her his child, to those which she had experienced under the same circumstances with Lady Buckhurst; and that the first exclamation of her joy was, “I am now blest more than any other human being; I

am possessed of two fathers, who, I am sure, will only vie with each other in their endeavours to display their affection for their child!"

Sir Jasper was now completely happy; he had gained all the credit which was due to his late disinterested conduct; and had the secret satisfaction of proving his intended granddaughter to be more than an equal alliance for his grandson; he accordingly wisely resolved to subject himself no longer to the painful task of endeavouring to be young at sixty-five, but to direct all his future cares to those *precious little Jaspers* which he hoped would shortly *sparkle* round his name in his genealogical table.

The alteration which took place in the conduct of Lady Dellaval created a wonderful consternation in the great world; the devotees of fashion found it a much more difficult matter to quiz her than they expected; and the happiness which she was known to enjoy in her new mode of life, rendered some of the members of ton doubtful whether the pursuit of *empty vanity* were really a *substantial enjoyment* or not.



Sir Benjamin and Lady Buckhurst fulfilled the prophecy of Lady Dellaval, by retiring to Rochester, and sinking into their native insignificance; and instead of reflecting how he might become a Baronet, poor Sir Benjamin heard his knighthood so frequently turned into ridicule, that had he confessed the truth he would not have grudged a moderate expence to have disencumbered himself of its possession.

As soon as the Colonel was sufficiently recovered from his wound to be able to travel, he left England, assigning as his motive the benefit which he hoped would be derived to his health from a change of air; but mental physicians know that *a change of air* is efficacious in many complaints which have no connexion with the animal system; and some of these gave it as their opinion that Jarvis Block had spoken so freely of the liberal interest with which the Colonel had endeavoured to reward him for the loans with which he had been accommodated, by him, that he had resolved to *travel* till the report should die away.

Jarvis Block's feelings were not of that delicate nature of which those of some human

beings are; and suffering the twenty thousand pounds which his wife ultimately brought him to be a *salvo* for the false colours under which she had at first entrapped him into marriage, they lived quite as happily together as is the lot of many couples whose unions have been contracted under much fairer auspices; and as time moved on many *chips of the block* strengthened their affection.

Mr. Leuwitzer equally anxious to reclaim the bad, as to ensure the happiness of the deserving, placed Ryecroft in an eligible situation in his mercantile house in London, where the retrospect of the many miseries which had attended his past life induced him to complete the reform he had begun; and to the unfortunate Le Blanc he gave the management of his mercantile house in Hamburgh, where he evinced his gratitude in his fidelity to his employer.

Edward Ryecroft having been provided by the same generous benefactor with a sufficient sum to transport himself to America, became a votary of the stage; in which profession we have, in the early part of this history, seen that he had made a successful

attempt under the name of Melmoth; and equal success attended his endeavours after he had crossed the Atlantic.

The visit which George Acton paid Sidney Valmont for the purpose of returning him his bribe of two guineas, by convincing him that there was a witness of his nefarious conduct ready to appear against him, if he did not wisely keep Georgina's secret by keeping his own, immediately pulled down the high spirits with which he had quitted Portman-square, after his last interview with Sir Jasper and Lady Dellaval; and rendered him particularly careful of not encountering in future any of the family.

By the constant intercourse which subsisted between the families of Mr. Leuwitzer and Lord Abberville, the friendship which the latter had long borne Mrs. Weimar became strengthened into a tenderer feeling, and he at length implored her to become the second mother of their beloved Georgina.—The married state, through which Adelaide had already passed, had not entirely divested her mind of those scruples which had possessed it so strongly when she was single; and although she did not attempt to deny

that she obtained a reciprocal attachment to Lord Abberley, she still hesitated to give him her hand: "She feared," she said, "that the world would be ill-natured enough to say, that she only married him for his rank."

Her brother began his usual smile; he saw it producing its accustomed effect of banishing her scruples; and he then said, "Pardon me, my dear sister, but you know your affection for me kept you so long from marrying that you contracted a few of the peculiarities of single ladies, before you became a wife at all; your first marriage has partly expunged them from your mind—take my advice to marry again, and fear not but that a second union will entirely correct them."

Need we say, that the advice of so good a brother was followed by a sister who had through life made him her oracle?—Nor can it hardly be necessary to add that Frederick Arlington and his Georgina were eminently happy; the possession of such hearts as they were blessed with, and the circle of affectionate friends and relatives in the bosom of which they were placed, are amongst the choicest gifts of Heaven.—Still it may perhaps be possible to adduce an instance of an individual even happier than themselves—

